

# INDIAN POLITICS

A SURVEY

BY  
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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

I AM deeply indebted to the Editor of the *Manchester Guardian* for giving me the opportunity in 1922 of making the survey of Indian conditions on which this book is based, and for permission to use the material reproduced from that newspaper.

I should add that the book was written before peace was made with Turkey at Lausanne. I have not thought it necessary to delete or alter the references made to the state of Indian Mohammedan feeling as it was before the Treaty. For the present attitude of the Indian Mohammedan can best be understood if we remember the past.

## INTRODUCTION

**T**HERE could not have been a more opportune moment for the publication of the letters which form this book. The situation in India to-day bewilders the ordinary Englishman, and not least those who thought they understood the country ten or even five years ago. It is not so much the manœuvres of non-co-operator or Swarajist or Khilafatist, the endless wheeling and reforming of the discontented forces, that puzzle the observer ; kaleidoscopic intrigue is familiar enough in India. Our anxiety goes deeper. The questions we ask ourselves are : What is behind the anti-British movement ? Is it a passing and superficial emotion, or has it come to stay ? Is it economic discontent or a national upheaval ? Is it confined to the permanently irreconcilable elements in the country, or has it permeated the masses ? What is to be done to meet it ? Can we carry on our policy and live it down ? Or is drastic change inevitable ?

On all these questions Mr. Gwynn throws a flood of light. He went to India equipped with a knowledge of the country under the old régime, but with an open mind. He has brought back exactly that which we needed and have not found elsewhere—a picture of what the average Indian is saying and thinking. In his letters we have no rodomontade or propaganda ; we have only the talk of the plain

man—the busy merchant in the town, the village worthies over their evening pipe, the doctor and the schoolmaster, the petty official and the student, Hindu, Moslem and Sikh. Mr. Gwynn also takes us up and down the country, through the vastly diverse racial areas, and shows how the popular attitude to our administration varies with local conditions. Incidentally he makes it clear how complex a business it is to get at the mind of India as a whole. But he gives us the broad outlines of the picture, and we can fill them in for ourselves.

Before we try to do so, let us remember the frame into which the picture has to be fitted. Four years ago, Parliament said to India in effect: "We are going to give you an apprenticeship in the art of governing your own country. All business of Imperial moment we shall at first keep in our own hands, managing it through our permanent Civil Service as before. With certain provincial business, particularly the maintenance of law and order, we shall do the same. But the residue of the provincial departments will be handed over to Indian Ministers, and will form your training-ground. Your legislatures will be elected, but by a very small electorate, for the people as a whole have as yet no idea of using a vote. And if your new parliaments go seriously wrong in any matters of moment, our Governors will have a power of over-riding them. In 1929 we shall send out a Commission to enquire how you have got on; and upon its report we shall decide whether to prolong your apprenticeship or to give you a larger measure of home-rule. We mean you to have self-government ultimately, but only when you prove that you are fit for it."

This is the setting which Parliament provided for the political development of India. For its caution there were of course excellent reasons—the lack of administrative experience in the Indian leaders, the inability of the great mass of the people to control their representatives, the absence of any real democratic feeling, and other obvious considerations. On the whole, the settlement was accepted in this country as reasonable, and a strong body of moderate opinion in India was pledged to support it. But from the outset there was another section of opinion which rejected it, and demanded nothing less than an undertaking that the British Government would evacuate India at a given date, ten years hence, five years or even sooner, according to the fervour of the individual claimant. Headed by that irresistible idealist, Mr. Gandhi, this extreme section swept the country in 1920–22, and is now definitely committed to a policy of breaking up the constitution. Non-co-operation was the first weapon of the extremists ; but its inherent weakness and ultimate failure are clearly brought out by Mr. Gwynn. They are now ready to seize on any other weapon, and one of incalculable potential strength is being forged in the discontent and restlessness with which they are inoculating the masses.

As practical people, who are still responsible to the world for the well-being of India, besides having no mean record of past service to our credit, we cannot let the situation run away with us. It has recently shown signs of getting out of control ; for such episodes as the Akali muddle and the mismanagement of the Bengal flood relief, both vividly sketched by the writer, could not have happened

if our officers were surer of their position. To check further drift and deterioration, three courses are open to us. One is to put down by force the ebullient nationalism which is assailing the whole fabric of our government. Another is to give India home-rule at once, and let her take the consequences. The third is to stick to our plan of training India in the practice of democracy, and to stand by her until she gains reasonable experience. Of these three the first may at once be ruled out. Except to repel force, we are never likely to use force ; and the resort of the Swarajists to organised violence is so remote a contingency that we may reduce our alternatives to two : surrender to the demand for home-rule, or adherence to the slower progress of the present constitutional machinery.

The choice between these two involves a decision the most momentous we have ever had to take in India. It is a decision which cannot be postponed, and it is a decision for which every thinking man and woman in England must share the responsibility. The data are complex and entirely different from those on which our old colonial policy led to disastrous failure in one half of North America and to signal success in the other. There are no precedents to help us, and all analogy is illusory. In this book, however, each of us will find some assistance in forming his own judgment. Here he will catch a glimpse of the tremendous social problems which India has to solve before she can come as an equal partner into the society of British nations ; he will see the distance that indigenous political thought has to travel before it reaches the bracing uplands of true democracy ; he will judge whether the home-

rulers have an adequate programme of national advancement to substitute for ours when they get rid of our administration and its western nostrums. It is the last issue which is by far the largest and the most vital. If the Swarajist were to get his wishes to-morrow, would he pursue that blend of East and West towards which all our constitutional reform is tending, or would he plunge back into the archaic ideals of some imaginary golden age, on which, in other lands, so many reforms have foundered and the happiness of so many millions been shipwrecked ? We English are a cautious people ; we like to see and choose our path, and neither Mr. Gwynn nor any other enquirer has yet discovered what path the Swarajist means to take, or to what goal he aspires.

*March 1924*

MESTON

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# INDIAN POLITICS

## I

### INTRODUCTORY

BOMBAY, *May 5, 1922.*

**I**T is fair to the reader to indicate briefly the point of view from which the writer looks at India. He has spent the better part of sixteen years in South India and has now landed again after the absence of a year. He has no solution for the Indian problem ready to hand, nor does he even think that he knows all that is really worth knowing about India. But he cannot claim that he enters India with his mind a perfect blank, free from all trace of earlier impressions. No man can spend years in India without receiving deep and lasting impressions of some sort, and there are two ideas which experiences in India have impressed deeply on the writer's mind.

The first is this. The Indian has for some time been feeling that his status in India and India's status in the world are not consistent with his sense of self-respect. The Reforms, of course, aimed at setting this right, but the Indian is still doubtful whether the Reforms have brought him, or are likely to bring him, the status he wants. To put the position a little more clearly. The Indian has been under-dog in his own country now for a century and a half and more. The top-dog has on the whole been behaving with

extraordinary moderation and self-restraint—so long, at least, as the under-dog kept lying quiet. But even so, the under-dog begins to find his position growing a little tedious. So now he is making an effort, and is finding his feet again. It is largely by the grace of the top-dog that he is able to do so, it is true, but all the same we ought to know better than to be surprised if the under-dog still displays a certain snappishness and an anxiety to be entirely free from the top-dog at the earliest possible moment. That does not mean that they can never be friends again. But it does mean that a very little might set them biting in earnest—harder than they ever bit before.

That is one impression. The other is this. Quite apart from "England's selfish interest in maintaining her ascendancy," there are very real difficulties which seem likely to prevent India from making a success of self-government within or without the Empire, at least for some time to come. What these difficulties are need not be explained now. It will no doubt be necessary to come back to them later.

Having these impressions in his mind, the writer is chiefly curious to find out whether the Indian recognises the existence of difficulties in the way of self-government, whether he is going to overcome those difficulties or to reconcile himself to some continuance of the limitations on his freedom, or whether he is going to do neither the one nor the other, but to choose anarchy and bloodshed rather than the continuance of foreign control, however salutary.

Hardly less interesting is the behaviour of the top-dog. Relaxing his hold is a ticklish business for him. If he is not careful he may get a nasty nip, but to display ill will or fear can only make matters worse.

Is he going to comport himself wisely ? But this is a question that has to be studied at home rather than in India. For in these days the attitude of the sovereign people at home counts for at least as much as that of the Anglo-Indian community in India, and the former has important reactions on the latter. It is therefore, perhaps, a pity that so far as India is concerned the sovereign is asleep most of the time. And then when anything occurs to wake him he is naturally apt to be a little out of temper just at first.

## II

### ENGLAND'S RELATIONS WITH INDIA—VIEWS OF SOME TYPICAL INDIAN PROFESSIONAL MEN

BOMBAY, *May 14.*

**B**OMBAY is a place where it is easy to fall in with professional men going to or coming from all parts of India. I have been talking now with four such men, Indians, and the first thing that strikes me is that no one of them expressed or, what is more to the point, seemed to feel anything but complete dissatisfaction with the reforms.

The moment we started talking I found myself back again among the old familiar arguments, arguments that every Anglo-Indian knows. The arguments are very good arguments. Given the premises the conclusions followed pat. But the premises were—well, spacious. Boiled down, the arguments and my replies ran something like this :

“England’s policy is directed solely by self-interest. England’s interest is directly opposed to ours. Therefore it is folly for us to hope anything from England or to co-operate.”

I contended : “If you like you can say of any nation that its policy is directed by self-interest. Could I not also say that your policy towards your friends and your servants is directed by self-interest ? The one is about as true or as false as the other. It doesn’t matter now which. What matters is this.

England came to India, and is in India to-day to buy and to sell. England is a trading nation and an experienced nation, and she has learnt that a country cannot be a good market unless it is prosperous. There is another thing she has learnt or is learning. It seems at first a pleasant thing to out-top your neighbours, to bear rule over them, and to compel them to do what you think good for them—and you. But experience soon teaches that happiness and safety don't lie that way for the nation any more than for the individual. It is safer and better to be a prosperous member of a prosperous community, an equal among equals. I don't say that every Englishman holds these views, but I think that a considerable majority holds them in regard to Western nations. As regards India the case is a bit different, I admit. You complained just now that England has always regarded India as a servant, an employee, and has never really expected or wished that she should rise to the higher status of equal or partner. Well, if we are speaking of the rank and file of the English I think your complaint is just, or at least would have been just a few years ago. But England is not only an experienced nation, she is also a nation remarkably capable of learning from experience, and especially from adversity, and she is getting a good, strong, wholesome dose of that now. She is already beginning to see that the lessons she learnt in dealing with her white colonies will have to be applied sooner or later to India, and that it may prove to be in her true interest to apply them sooner rather than later. I believe that even to-day a majority in England would gladly give you Dominion Home Rule, but that they sincerely believe that you would use it to get quarrel-

ling among yourselves, reducing the country to anarchy, and thereby ruining England's market and the security for her invested capital, not to speak of yourselves, since you will not allow us to take any interest in you.

"Another thing. You always speak of English policy as if it were directed by an abstract, inhuman, and highly consistent monster called England or the English Government. But remember that England, and for the matter of that the English Government, is made up of a collection of concrete, human, and highly inconsistent individuals most remarkably like you or me. The policy and action of the British Government in the long run is the resultant of the wills of such individuals. If you believe that that resultant is pointing and is likely to continue to point away from the policy of putting you in a position to manage your own affairs in a reasonable time, then, I grant you, your case for non-co-operation is made out. But from all I have seen, read, and heard of the human beings whose will goes to make up that resultant, I should say that, on the whole and for the greater part of the time, the tendency is distinctly in your favour, and that it is likely to set more definitely and more steadily to your side as time goes on, though just at the moment it is pointing a bit away from you. I grant you that."

They replied: "We must judge by deeds, not words, and we see that the tendency is against us all the time. What can you say to that?"

"Quite right to bring me to the test of facts, but isn't it just there that I can so easily confute you. Look at the reforms."

"There we were waiting for you. The declaration

of 1917 was made in fear, when you needed our aid to help you to save your skin from the Germans."

"But the Act was not passed into law till long after the Germans were down and out. It would have been easy to find a pretext for going back on the proclamation."

"You could not for shame before the face of the world. As a matter of fact the Government of India tried to whittle down the reforms by its despatches."

"But those suggestions were turned down. The Act itself went quite as far as the report."

"All camouflage. The Councils give no real power."

"They give a great deal of real power, as you would have found out if you had come into them and worked them. If you boycott them you can hardly expect them to forward your ends. But leave the Councils and look at other things. Fifteen years back, when I first came to the country, pretty well the whole of what was called local self-government was run by Government officials, mostly Europeans. To-day that is entirely changed, and one can say that pretty well the whole of local self-government is in the hands of Indians, mostly elected non-officials, too. Then take the Central Executives. When I came to the country some of the elder civilians would have had a fit at the idea of an Indian being appointed to the Executive Council of a province. Now half the Executive councillors in the provinces are Indians, and, including the Ministers, there is an Indian majority in all the provincial Cabinets, and at the centre you have three Indians in the Viceroy's Executive Council, and till the other day you

had Lord Sinha as governor at the head of a province."

"All camouflage. We do not care for your appointing Indians as governors or Executive councillors. We know that you do it because you know that the men will turn Government men as soon as they are appointed. You choose men to subserve your own ends."

"Well, Sankaran Nair was not exactly the man I should have picked myself if I had been looking for a pliable man. And are you quite sure that you are a more patriotic, an honester, or a stronger man than Sinha?"

"We did not mean to suggest it. But no good comes of these appointments. They are all camouflage."

Then I said: "What is the least that England could give that you would accept as evidence of the honesty of her intentions?"

"There you are. You speak of giving. You have not realised that we are only claiming our rights and that we want to take them, not be given them."

"Very well. Put it in this way. What action can England take that would convince you of the honesty of her intentions?"

They thought a while. Then they said: "Give us fiscal autonomy, a national militia, and equal treatment in the colonies."

There you have it. That means that to clear their minds of distrust you would have to give Dominion Home Rule and something more besides. For they say, fairly enough, that they cannot feel that they have fiscal autonomy so long as the fiscal policy of the Government of India is controlled by a mainly



foreign bureaucracy which is, as I would say, not completely, and, as they would say, not at all, under the influence of Indian opinion. So by fiscal autonomy they mean popular control of the Government of India, and by a national militia they mean an army under the influence of Indian public opinion. And by equal treatment in the colonies they mean something which I fear may be beyond our power to give, however much we may desire to give it.

So I said: "That is a fair answer. You want Dominion Home Rule?"

"Yes; if you mean honestly by us, why do you not give us that?"

"As I said before, because most of the men who mean well by you sincerely believe that you would use it to start cutting each other's throats. And I tell you straight, I'm not a bit sure they aren't quite right."

"But what concern of yours is it if we do? We are quite willing to take the risk."

"But in ruining yourselves you will incidentally cause very serious loss to our trade and our invested capital. Perhaps some of us might be willing to face that loss if we thought anybody was going to be the better of it. But it damps one's enthusiasm for self-sacrifice to feel that nobody is going to be a bit the better and everybody a great deal the worse because of it."

"That is not the reason at all. England's interest is to keep us down, and England will never act against her interest till she is forced to."

"Well, that I see is your conviction, and no evidence or argument of mine can ever shake it. Thank God, it is no longer my duty to try to shake it. My only

concern is to try and find out what you really do believe. Now tell me this. Do you think non-violent non-co-operation is going to lead you anywhere ? ”

“ See its effect in raising the character of the people. ”

“ I see its effect in raising riots. ”

“ Now, be fair. Tell us, do you honestly think that any other people could have carried on for so long so great an agitation over so wide an area in the presence of foreign rulers with so few outbreaks of violence ? ”

“ Honestly, I do not, if we leave out of account Malabar, which is a special tract. But I give the credit for this partly to the patience of the Government, but mainly to the extraordinary personal influence of Mr. Gandhi. That personal influence is hardly likely to have a permanent effect on the character of the Indian peoples. So soon as Mr. Gandhi's words are no longer fresh in their ears we shall find them again, as they have always been, as ready as any people in the world to resort to violence whenever their passions are roused. ”

That brought a surprising and, I thought, revealing outburst.

“ No, no, you have disarmed us and made us an impotent people. We quarrel among ourselves and slap each other's faces, but we can't fight. How many fighting races were there in India when the English came ? Now there are only the Sikhs and the Gurkhas ; that is all. The rest of us you have made impotent. ”

“ What nonsense ! Anyone with half an eye can see that any race in India could fight if only it were quite sure that there was something worth fighting for. But now, look here. The logical consequence of the beliefs you hold and the natural outcome of

the emotion you have shown in expressing them is surely a resort to violence. Are we coming to that, and, if so, how soon ? ”

Then I noticed a curious thing. They all shrank back at that. They were all genuinely shocked at the idea of violence. They had not yet accustomed their minds to think of it, even as a possible line of action. All, that is, except one man, who loved to speak of himself as “ an idealist.” His inside seemed to be the familiar blend of logic and sentimentality working on abstractions in a void, without reference to concrete persons or things. This man, I noticed, did not shrink back with his companions. Instead, he murmured reflectively, “ Yes, I fear it must come to that. No good cause ever prevailed without suffering. We shall have to face it some day.”

My friend (I liked him well) was, I am sure, as soft-hearted a man as ever stepped. In his most vicious moments he never desired anything worse than to pull his enemy's hair. But if he reads this he will take it as an insult. And he will be a little mollified when I add what is true, that I greatly fear that some day he will convince himself that forcible protests are a duty, and that day he will take a gun and go forth openly and meet some luckless policeman face to face and shoot him down. And then he will allow himself to be hanged there for manfully and cheerfully thinking that he is thereby vindicating the virility of the Indian people and advancing the cause of humanity.

My Indian friends, if they read this, would complain that I had not done justice to their arguments. Very likely not, and I apologise for it, but it really does not matter. What is important is not the arguments but the convictions and the emotion and tenacity with

which these are held. I think I have made it clear that the convictions do not proceed from the arguments but the arguments from the convictions. It is convictions of this kind that are apt to get acted on.

Perhaps I have conveyed the impression that there was explosive matter in the minds of the men with whom I spoke. Well, that is what I meant to do. But against this impression you must set off the fact that these very men are personally perfectly friendly towards Europeans. And the city looks as peaceful and prosperous as Paradise. It would take the eye of a hawk to discern any trace of ill-will to Europeans in the streets.

These were my first impressions. Since I wrote them down I have been in contact with whole-time journalists and politicians. The impression they convey, and apparently wish to convey, is friendliness and a readiness to find a way out. They don't suggest dangerous emotions. But their ways out might prove in experience more difficult to tread than the straight and narrow path suggested by my first friends.

### III

#### INDIAN JOURNALISTS AND POLITICIANS IN BOMBAY

BOMBAY, *May 17.*

OF the journalists and local politicians I met in Bombay some were Co-operators, some Non-Co-operators. All agreed on the following points. The lull that has followed Mr. Gandhi's arrest does not mean contentment or that the country is going to settle down and work the reforms. It means dejection or obedience to Mr. Gandhi's order to abstain from violence. The men are anxious to impress me with the fact that there is no racial hatred in the country, and I have frequently to remind them that what I want to know is not what is in Mr. Gandhi's doctrine but what is in the minds of the people. When this is made clear they admit that the lull is likely to be followed by a physical force movement in some form or other unless the English Government make a very substantial peace-offering.

Asked what the English Government should do, they all say that India does not want to get what we think good for her. She wants to be allowed to decide for herself what she needs. So what they suggest is a round-table conference, all classes and interests in India to be represented, and the officials to be in attendance to supply information. One man suggests that the Viceroy should pledge himself in advance to stake his position on effect being given to the decisions of the conference. Asked for an

indication of what the conference is likely to propose, most of them, including some Non-Co-operators, say "not immediate and complete Home Rule." They recognise the need for a transition period, which some put at five but most at ten years. Few are willing to contemplate a longer period of transition. Almost all want complete control of the Provincial Governments at once. All want immediate and complete control of the industrial, commercial, and financial departments of the Government of India.

"As to the army, we shall control its budget, and, besides, you must at once take such steps as will convince us that the army is going to be Indianised root and branch in, say, ten years."

All are anxious to persuade me that they don't want the English officials to go. "We need them. We want them. Only let them govern us according to our ideas." That sounds very simple, but in practice it is not. You may perhaps be able to govern people according to your own ideas. But if you try to govern people according to someone else's ideas you make a mess of it.

The younger men here think the Mohammedan difficulty a thing of the past. The elder men admit that there is still a wide difference in outlook and interest between the Mohammedan and the Hindu, but they are confident that as against the foreigner they will stand together. They say: "Though the Khilafat agitation supplied the greater part of the driving force of the Non-Co-operation movement, yet the Mohammedan has now come to see that with the help of the Hindu he can free his country from foreign domination, and he is going to do that whether the Turks are content with your peace terms or not.

There may be difficulties for us Hindus after your Raj is gone, but we are prepared to face them."

All agreed that the masses were far more suspicious of and hostile to the foreigner than the English-educated classes. "It is easier for us to stir up hatred against you among the masses than to feel hatred against you ourselves. The masses are now a little tired of the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs, but if a new cause of offence crops up it will be easier than ever to excite them against you." They insisted on the close connection that exists between the English-educated and the vernacular speakers. One man pointed out that he was born in an up-country village. Four of his brothers are living there still, looking after the land. He corresponds with them regularly and visits them from time to time. The brother of another man was a petty shopkeeper in the bazaar of a big town. They also keep up regular intercourse. In fact the Hindu social and family system makes such intercourse between the different classes (not castes) the rule rather than the exception. Further, the vernacular newspaper reaches all villages and is read aloud and is discussed.

I give some scraps from a conversation with the editor of a Non-Co-operating vernacular paper. He had just given his views on the Mohammedan difficulty.

I asked him : "Now about the outcastes. Do you anticipate any difficulty from them ?"

"No, I think not. We shall be able to bring them with us."

"Well, but—excuse a rude question—there are two ways of bringing a man with you. One way is to persuade him to come. The other is to drag him

by the hair. Which method are you going to employ? I think the outcaste himself is in some anxiety about your answer."

He laughed. "Well, I admit it is excusable. But Mr. Gandhi is very much in earnest on the question, and we shall go a long way to meet the outcaste and to relieve his anxiety, and I think we shall be able to bring him in peaceably."

"Well, now, answer me another rude question. You sit here in the town writing for the ryots in their villages. Does the ryot think what you say, or do you say what the ryot thinks?"

He laughed again. "I was trained by Tilak thirty years ago. I will tell you what he used to say to us: 'Write, and if there is an echo it is right, and if there is no echo it is all wrong.'"

Then I thought he had learnt his job, so I asked him another question. "Tell me now. What does the ryot really think of Mr. Gandhi's imprisonment?"

"I will tell you what a ryot said to me the other day. 'See. The white man will not bend even before the greatest saint that India can produce.'"

That rings genuine and significant to me.

I talked to a Moderate, a frail little man, so gentle, so refined, and so reasonable that you would say he could not survive a single day in English life. He hoped that England would be wise and reasonable and act in time. I asked him how many of his friends were Non-Co-operators. "If you include theoretical Non-Co-operators—that is, men who hold the doctrines of Non-Co-operation but do not always act up to them when some sacrifice is involved—then 90 per cent." "And among the students?" "An even higher percentage, I should say." A



Non-Co-operating politician of experience told me that he could carry 75 per cent. of the general electorate, 60 per cent. of the highly-educated university electorate, and 90 per cent. of the students. There is probably some exaggeration in these estimates, but I have not come across anyone who doubts that the Non-Co-operators could sweep the country at an election if they chose to stand.

Another point was strongly impressed on me by Co-operators, who have received very scant consideration and courtesy from Non-Co-operators and have no cause to speak too kindly of their merits. Yet they all agree that Mr. Gandhi's movement has called forth a new spirit and set up a new standard of value in public life. Generosity, courage, and straightforwardness are at a premium. Deeds, not words, are expected of would-be leaders. It is not contended that speculation and intimidation, envy, malice, lying, and slander have vanished from India. They seek shelter in the movement still. The purebred mischief-maker still finds a suitable field for his activities in debased forms of Non-Co-operative propaganda and practice. But my Co-operating friends gave me from their own knowledge remarkable instances of courageous and generous acts done by men whose upbringing had not been such as to stimulate generosity or courage.

I could not, however, get much evidence to show that the constructive side of the Non-Co-operation programme is making real headway. (Even Khaddar is hardly taken seriously.) The old difficulties—lack of sustained energy and organising ability in the rank and file and a certain readiness to fall out about trifles—are said still to be felt.

Having said so much about the Non-Co-operators, I ought in justice to the Co-operators and Moderates to say this. It used to be, and still is, the fashion to decry the Moderates and Co-operators as if they were a party of weak men and time-servers. There may once have been something in that reproach, but so far as I can see there is little or no basis for it now. The Moderate or Co-operating party is to-day so unpopular that it takes some strength of mind to remain a Co-operator. The second- and third-rate men are now, as a rule, to be found among the theoretical Non-Co-operators. The first-raters may be looked for either among the Co-operators or among the practising Non-Co-operators. There is some difficulty about meeting the latter. They are mostly in gaol. At least some 20,000 of them are there.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A few weeks after this was written the Government of India published figures to show that the number of politicals then in prison was about 4,000. I was not able anywhere to get a detailed and authoritative statement of the facts, but from my enquiries and observations I gather that the truth was something as follows. During the preceding nine months some twenty or thirty thousand men had been sent to prison for "political" offences. Not a few of these were "4 anna men" who had been hired to go to gaol at a time when the prohibition against "volunteering" gave the Non-Co-operators a chance of bringing the administration into contempt. The Government had, of course, no wish to hold 20,000 men in gaol, and they opened the gaol-gates to anyone who was willing to sign an apology or an undertaking to be of good behaviour, and took even more drastic measures too, I believe, to get the unimportant prisoners off their hands. But though some of those who went to gaol were riff-raff they were accompanied by a very large number of respectable and respected men, and even in July in the Punjab, the United Provinces and in Bengal many of the men I specially wanted to see were in prison. In Bombay the "missing" were much fewer, as Sir George Lloyd declined to "proclaim" the congress volunteers or to make any use of special laws intended for emergencies. Mr. Gandhi was charged and convicted under the ordinary law.

## IV

### VIEWS OF A MOHAMMEDAN EX-OFFICIAL

BOMBAY, *May 18.*

THE other day I fell in with an Indian Mohammedan, an ex-official. You would not know the name if I gave it to you. He has not sat in the seat of the mighty. All the same, he has had great experience of men and affairs, and is still in touch with both. A few minutes' talk seemed to me to reveal not only great experience but also shrewdness, independence, and outspokenness. I thought: Here is my chance to test the correctness of the impressions I have received. This man can and will tell me whether I am right or no. So I gave him my impressions briefly thus: "India has come to distrust England utterly. No action which England is in the least likely to take will suffice to restore confidence. The present lull is merely temporary. It will be succeeded after a short interval by a deliberately directed campaign of violence. There is no way out."

He thought a moment, and then said: "You are not far wrong, but I think you are too pessimistic. It is true that the calm we see now does not mean contentment. It means disappointment. The country is feeling its helplessness, and is feeling it bitterly. It is true, too, that the younger generation have lost all faith in you and that they try to persuade me to

abandon my faith in you too, and I must admit they bring very cogent evidence to support their case. But I keep my faith, and I believe England will yet have the sense to right the wrong she has done to Turkey and the Mohammedan world. I am an independent man. I never let myself be dragged into the Khilafat agitation. I told the leaders they were doing our cause great harm by pushing unjust and unnecessary demands for the re-establishment of Turkish dominion over the Arab. I am one of the few Mohammedans in India who see that the Arab has as much claim on us as the Turk. But you—you helped the French to cheat the Arabs, and then you set up the Greeks to rob the Turks. There is no denying that, and you must go back on it and make the Greeks disgorge. You mayn't like it, but it must be done."

"You think that if the Mohammedan question is satisfactorily settled it won't be necessary to take the Hindu claims too seriously?"

"No, no. The Hindu has a good case against you. You must settle it, too, or there will be trouble."

"You say the country is feeling its helplessness. If the Khilafat question were out of the way, would not the country settle down? There would be sullenness and grumbling, no doubt. Still, things would settle down. The driving force of the agitation was Mohammedan, you said?"

"Yes, but I don't think the agitation would cease. The Mohammedan is with the Hindu against you in many things. The lull would continue for a while. There would be preparation and then violence within three years' time, nearer the end of three years than the beginning. Time would be needed for

feeling to spread among the masses and for preparation. But if you don't settle the claims against you it must come to violence."

"These people tell me it is not for Government to decide what should be given them. They want to have a conference and to decide among themselves upon the form of another new Constitution?"

"Yes, that is what they want. But a formal conference is no good. Each man will be defending his case or wondering what his followers are thinking of him. They will never reach an agreement that way. If you want to find out the truth about anything there is only one way to do it. Go round and talk privately to the men whose opinion is really worth having."

"What need to tell that to me? Why else am I here talking to you? We old officials know a thing or two, for all they say of us."

He allowed himself to be amused, so I tried to draw him farther. "But, come now, tell me truly. What do you think of the Reformed Constitution?"

"Why, you know as well as I do. It was necessary to give us Indians more share in the executive government, and the Legislative Councils, too, are right enough. But there was no need for these masses of illiterate voters. That was a dreadful mistake. You would have got far better men in the Councils, men far more trusted by the masses and, I may say, far more truly representative of the masses, by giving the vote only to men of some education, status, or property."

"Well, now, apart from the Khilafat question, what is it that you think wants setting right most?"

The answer that came was slightly unexpected, though I ought to have been prepared for it.

"Why, finance, of course. Look at the rotten finance of the last three years. The exchange blunders, military expenditure, the inflation of salaries, and the multiplication of highly paid posts. When I heard that under the reforms we were going to have a Governor, four Executive Councillors, and three Ministers to do the work that used to be done by a Governor and three Executive Councillors—why, then I prayed for Sir William Meyer. 'If Sir William were where he ought to be, and if he had the stump of a blue pencil and the back of an old envelope, he'd soon put a stop to that,' I said. Send him out to us. That's the man we need. He'd use the shears, beginning with the high salaries of you Europeans. He's not afraid of any man. Tell him I said so, though he can't promote me now. I was trained under him."

I report what he said faithfully, as he is a sensible man. I myself always feel some curiosity to know what Sir William said about the four Executive Councillors and the three Ministers. About the European salaries, naturally, I do not agree. Speaking for myself, I would not do the work for twice the money. I do not think India will get the Englishmen she wants for a penny less. But does she really want quite so many Englishmen? About that I am not so sure.

## V

### A PARSI MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE

BOMBAY, *May* 18.

I WANT next to introduce you to the Hon. Mr. Phiroze Sethna, Member of the Council of State. Mr. Sethna is a Parsi; that is, he is a member of an immigrant community which has devoted itself to business and prospered under the British Raj. Till recently the greater part of this community held itself distinctly aloof from the Indian Nationalist movement. Mr. Sethna has, besides vigour and directness, a knowledge of men and affairs which is by no means confined to India.

He opened thus: "What do Indians want? We want first that you should act up to your professions. Secondly, that we should be masters in our own house." He then took me over the whole field of Indian affairs, applying these two propositions as he went. Naturally he started with the need for complete fiscal autonomy. Yet, on the way, he showed me that he understands and sympathises with the Imperial point of view and that he is one of those few Indians who realise how deeply English sentiment was wounded by the Non-Co-operators' attitude in regard to the Prince of Wales's visit. I will not attempt to reproduce all he said, but here are some of the more important points.

I asked him: "Can things go on for the time

being on the present basis—that is, supposing that our officers in India act with reasonable fairness and common sense ? ”

He answered : “ Well, I am one of the men who some time back committed themselves publicly to the opinion that India should carry on on the basis of the reforms for the ten-year period laid down in the Act. I still think we might have done this if it had not been for the financial situation. But the financial issue is to-day the most important issue both in the central and in the provincial Governments. We have deficits everywhere, and we find ourselves powerless under the reforms to deal effectively with the situation. I have therefore come to the conclusion that we must get extended powers much earlier. The situation in regard to military expenditure is specially intolerable. Military expenditure swallows up more than a third of our total revenues, including the revenues of the provincial Governments. Not only can we not cut it, we cannot even criticise it because we are ignorant of military affairs. And why are we ignorant of military affairs ? Because the Government has seen to it that no Indian should ever occupy a position that would give him a real insight into them. So I think we must insist on complete control of the provincial Governments, except, perhaps, for law and order. We must also have control of part of the central Government, including fiscal policy and finance. And you must make a real start and convince us that the army is going to be Indianised in a reasonable time. Mind you, each Tommy costs in pay alone about Rs.1,900 a year. Each Sepoy costs about Rs.400. Replace even 10,000 Tommies by



10,000 Sepoys, and how much do you save in pay alone? ”

I tried him on another point. “ I have heard people hint that if the Khilafat question were settled satisfactorily Hindu feeling is not strong enough to make it necessary to depart from the procedure contemplated in the Reforms Act; that is, to wait ten years and have a commission.”

“ No, no. That won't do. The day of the old policy of *divide et impera* is over. The Mohammedan is out for national ends as much as the Hindu. The Khilafat question is not by any means the only thing that is keeping him in politics.”

“ The experts sometimes reproach me for speaking of the nationalist spirit in India. But I say that, by whatever name you choose to call it, that which is popularly called nationalist spirit is the strongest force at work in India to-day. Is that right? ”

“ Certainly; there can be no doubt about it. Look at my own community, the Parsis. A few years ago we looked upon ourselves as foreigners with interests separate from those of India. Now we too are Indians. It is the same, I hear, with the Indian Christians in Madras.”

“ Is the root cause of the present unrest this unsatisfied nationalist aspiration or the economic trouble? ”

“ The root cause is the unsatisfied nationalist aspiration. That is intensified by the very serious economic troubles. But we could face those economic troubles with much greater equanimity if we felt that our hands were free to take our own measures to meet the situation. As it is we have to leave matters in your hands and, to speak quite frankly,

we think you have made a thorough bad mess of our business. But let me make myself quite clear. If our economic troubles vanished, if the exchanges steadied, trade revived, Budgets balanced, food prices fell, monsoons were favourable, and crops were good, then you would find us still just as determined as ever to be masters in our own house."

"On the day when you are masters in your own house, what will happen to our capital and our people in India?"

"They will be perfectly safe. To-day there is friction over the question of political supremacy. So long as that question is unsettled bad blood may be engendered at any moment and the lives of your people may be endangered. You, therefore, need a certain number of British troops in the country. I quite see that. But once the question of political supremacy is out of the way you won't need a single British soldier in India so far as the protection of your people and your property is concerned. And I can tell you, too, that you will find that we shall then need British brains and British capital just as much as ever, and we shall feel much less reluctance to employ them."

This is not the bait held out by a Non-Co-operator. It is the opinion of a Parsi man of business. And Parsis are themselves capitalists, and are still to a certain extent strangers in India. The opinion of a Parsi on this point is therefore worth attention. I may say that I got a very similar opinion from a Lancashire man much respected in the cotton industry in Bombay.

## VI

### AN INDIAN MERCHANT

BOMBAY, *May 18.*

**W**ANTING to meet a typical Indian merchant, I got an introduction and caught my man at the end of his day's work. Like all the other Indians I have met, he showed himself perfectly willing to talk of public affairs. He started, of course, on fiscal autonomy, but before he had got far I found that he had been playing an important part in the negotiations that were opened early in the year with a view to bringing about a truce and a conference between the Government and the Non-Co-operators. This surprised me, because the man who introduced us had given me the impression that I was to meet a rising young merchant who was making money but had not yet built up a fortune. So I asked my man how he came to be mixed up in politics.

His explanation was interesting. A few years back the Government of India appointed a committee to go into the question of the purchase of stores for Indian Government departments with a view to ensuring that money should not be wasted in getting out from England articles which can advantageously be bought in India. My friend was appointed to this committee as an Indian man of business with no special interest in politics. In the course of his work on the committee he had to go into the whole history

of the subject and to study the official record of transactions. His researches convinced him that English firms had been able to exercise a strong underhand pull and that Indian interest had been seriously sacrificed. So deep was the conviction that he felt it his duty thereafter to devote to politics such time as he could spare from his business. He was at pains to excuse himself to me for having done so little in this direction. I never heard of an English business man feeling qualms of conscience because he had devoted so little time to politics.

Having cleared up this point, he gave me some specific instances of the way in which an Indian merchant finds his interests sacrificed in his own country. They were comparatively small matters but extremely annoying, if his version of the facts was correct. On that point I am not a competent judge, but I happen to know that an English business man who is a competent judge was satisfied that he had a substantial grievance.

He spoke very bitterly of the position of the Indian merchant and of the exchange policy of Government. He had sustained heavy losses, and he felt them the more because, as he told me (and I am sure he was speaking the truth), he had been one of the men who had been most active during the war in assisting the Indian Government to get supplies out of the country at strictly controlled prices. But though he spoke bitterly he was not an unreasonable man. Very far from it. I will produce conclusive evidence of this. He told me that in one important matter the Viceroy was quite right and Mr. Gandhi was quite wrong. Now, to the average Indian, Co-operator or Non-Co-operator, such an idea is simply inconceivable, a

contradiction in terms, or a breach of the law of nature.

Then he got on to the general question of England's position in regard to India. "I quite understand it if one country takes possession of another country and runs it frankly in its own interests. But you profess to run our country in our interests. Then you must act up to your professions or be guilty of hypocrisy. Experience shows us that in practice you don't live up to your professions. The desire to make a little profit when no one is looking still comes creeping back. That is human nature. The task you have set yourself is too hard for human nature. Then what are we to do? I don't believe in Non-Cooperation. I think we should go into the Councils and use them for all they are worth. We shall appeal to your sense of shame, to the world at large, to America. Besides, as occasion offers we shall apply power. I do not believe in non-violence. I think the doctrine is dishonest. In the long run it is going to be a question of power." (Those were the words he used. Evidently a reminiscence of *Machtfrage*. He meant that the question would be decided by might, not right or reason.) "There are strong under-currents at work already. Men are thinking hard in many places how to apply power. Some think of non-payment of taxes. Others say 'Win over the outcastes. They are the only people who will serve the European. If we win over the outcaste we can arrange a complete boycott any day.' Others have other plans, all directed towards the same end."

I next asked him, "When you get complete control what will happen to our trade?" His answer was

very frank, and it came from a man who is in as good a position to make a forecast as any man can be.

"We shall still trade with you. We know you and you know us. And, besides, as I am always telling my people, you are rich, and it pays better to trade with the rich than with the hungry. The hungry man will always want to make the last penny out of you. But as to Protection, we shall protect our own industries just as much as we judge to be in our own interests. How much will that be? Well, we all believe in protecting infant industries. As to continuing high Protection, some of us are doubtful about that. But about one thing you may be sure. We shall see that our industries and our merchants get the same degree of favoured treatment as yours do in England. When you call for tenders there is a clause that protects your men against subsidised foreign competitors. Your shipping has the first refusal of Government cargo. So in India the coasting trade will come to our shipping unless it can be shown that the country's interests suffer thereby. At this moment British companies which pay no income tax in this country have the favoured treatment which our shipping ought to have. You must reconcile yourselves to the loss of that. But, for all that, we shall trade and we shall be friends, too."

I tried then to get him on to the subject of military expenditure.

"Military expenditure? Have you ever read Tod's *Annals of Rajasthan*? I have just been reading them." Here was another and far greater surprise. What was this Bombay merchant doing, reading stories of the old Rajput chivalry? The next sentence seemed at first to take me even farther from my

objective. "Well, I have come to think Mr. Gandhi is right after all. We must destroy the present system of education even if it means a loss to one generation of students. But you think I am travelling far away from the point."

"No, I follow. You are going to say that you must rebuild the system of education from its foundation in order to inspire a martial spirit into coming generations."

"Yes, that is it. When I read Tod's *Annals* and think of the splendid spirit of those men, and that once there were fighting races in all parts of India, and that we are now disarmed——! And when we go to the continent of Europe men ask us 'Are you sheep? We hear there are three hundred million of you, and you allow yourselves to be ruled by one hundred thousand Englishmen.' What can we say? We must remake our system of education, and bring up our boys to have the martial spirit."

This was not exactly what I had expected to hear when I went to call on a prosperous Indian merchant. So I asked him whether he was a Bombay man. Here came one more surprise. He was a subject of an old friend of yours, Ranjitsinhji. His father had owned an old gun and had had to give it up in obedience to some order under the Arms Act. This was while my friend was still a small boy. He remembered wondering why his father made such a fuss about it and took it so much to heart.

Then we got to the Army Budget. He was extremely bitter. There is no need to repeat here what he said. So many others have said the same that their voices must, I think have carried even to England. But he stressed one point. "I believe the

North-west Frontier is a mere bogey. I do not speak at random. Indian officers have told me so. I believe the frontier could be held by a purely Indian force of very moderate size. As a matter of fact, if you read history you find that the Rajputs and the Sikhs were always able to hold the frontiers when there was any sort of decent Government behind them." The same view was put to me with evident sincerity by other Indians. Their opinion on the military problem should not carry any weight. But the fact that they hold this opinion may none the less be very important.

The Indian merchant class used to be notorious for strict and unswerving attention to its own business. Here we have a rising man of this class mixing in high politics, reading the *Annals of Rajasthan*, and wanting to give the rising generation a martial education. That means something, doesn't it?

"Who introduced you to this Bolshevik?" you ask. "Some Non-Co-operator has evidently foisted an extremist crank on you as a typical Indian merchant." Well, as a matter of fact, I got my introduction from a man at the top of the cotton industry in Bombay—a Lancashire man, of course. He told me I should meet a very sensible man, and I think he was right.



## VII

### BOMBAY : GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

BOMBAY, *May 18.*

**H**ERE are the general impressions left by what I read, heard, and saw in Bombay.

The Government have beaten Mr. Gandhi's non-violent Non-Co-operation movement. But we have not advanced one step towards securing the co-operation of the people. The country is discouraged. It has lost faith in the efficacy of Mr. Gandhi's tactics. It would not be easy again to waken enthusiasm for the old programme; perhaps not even for the old leader. But there is a welcome waiting for a new programme and (if Mr. Gandhi stands aside) for a new leader. The great majority in the country is not in the mood to come in and co-operate.

My former acquaintances among Indian politicians were of the lawyer, schoolmaster, or journalist type. The business-man politician of Bombay was new to me, and he made a deep impression upon me. He strikes one as being very much in touch with realities, very much the practical man. There must be plenty of this type Non-Co-operating, but the men I actually met were Co-operators. But their co-operation is not going to be unconditional. If I understood them aright their terms are as follows: "We must have fiscal autonomy. There must be no new taxation till

we have control of finance, with power to retrench where we please and as we please."

Now it looks as if the next Budget will compel the Government of India to choose between fresh taxation and a drastic reduction in the size of the army, and especially in the number of British troops.<sup>1</sup> So next Budget season is likely to bring a crisis. Further, no one doubts that the Non-Co-operators could, if they wished it, obtain a sweeping majority at an election. The next election is due eighteen months hence. There will be another crisis then, for there does not appear to be the least chance of the country changing its mind in the meanwhile. Certainly it will not do so so long as the threat of fresh taxation is hanging over it.

I happen to be one of those who believe that India can and must bear heavier taxation for the sake of repairing or reconstructing her house. But I doubt whether I shall ever find a single Indian who agrees with me in this. And even I can see that to consent to heavier taxation means a great sacrifice for so poor a country as India is. And I can also see quite clearly that there is no use in hoping to persuade India to make such a sacrifice so long as she sees more than a third of her taxes dedicated without her consent to the upkeep of an army which is partly manned and wholly controlled by foreigners.

Now for fiscal autonomy and the cotton duties, import and Excise. Every Indian holds the following beliefs: "No free country would dream of putting an Excise duty on its own manufactures in order to

<sup>1</sup> In 1923 there was both a big reduction in the Army Budget and fresh taxation. The Viceroy had to override the Assembly and use his extraordinary power to double the salt tax.

prevent its own manufacturers from having an advantage in its own markets. England compelled India to do this thing. That was an abuse of power. Fiscal autonomy is required primarily to prevent similar abuses of power in the future. Further, it is needed to get rid of the cotton Excise when the financial situation permits and also to give protection to infant industries."

If Indians are told that this creed is inconsistent with their duty to the Empire they first ask: "Dare you say that to Canada or Australia?" They then add: "If, after all, we find that our creed is inconsistent with partnership in your Empire, then we are sorry, but that means for us good-bye to the thought of partnership."

I heard a couple of Lancashire men in the Bombay cotton industry discussing the question. What they said was something like this: "We are Lancashire men through and through. We mean some day to go back and settle in Lancashire. Lancashire interests are our interests. None the less we think that the Indian view is substantially right. Further, we believe that if you took any man in Lancashire and transported him to this country, within six months he would agree with us." They added something more: "Apart from the question of justice, it is a pity people at home are not quicker to see what is expedient. As a matter of fact, the recent rises in the cotton duties were revenue-raising devices which suggested themselves to the Government of India. They were not protective measures pressed for by the Bombay cotton industry. But Indians have been promised fiscal autonomy, and they are determined to be masters in their own house. So when they heard

that Lancashire was anxious to interfere and to deny or limit their right to fiscal autonomy—why, then they began to see red. They were in a temper to cut their own throats for the sake of showing that they could do what they liked with their own. Leave them alone and they'll be all right, but interfere with their affairs and they'll go mad and hit out blindly."

I gather the same holds good of the question of the treatment of Indian labour in the Indian cotton mills. The millowners are doing something—a good deal, in fact. Many of the staff of the mill are Lancashire men, old trade unionists. One of them asked me to impress on you that he and his like have no intention of forgetting what they have learnt, and that they are going to see that labour gets fair consideration. Besides what is being done by the millowners, the local Government have set up a labour office, and are putting through a colossal town-development scheme which aims at solving the housing problem, the root of three-fourths of the existing evils. Further, there are independent Indian workers who have devoted themselves to watching and forwarding the interests of labour. In spite of all this a very little observation and inquiry makes it clear that present conditions are bad. Indeed, a much more striking adjective would be justified. But it is equally clear that things cannot be put right in a day, and that any interference from England is now more likely to hurt than to help the labourers' cause. Steady pressure from the League of Nations is much less likely to be resented, and may be useful.

Would a Home Rule India go in for high Protection? I doubt it. Just now India is all for Protection, partly because most of her industries are infant or

unborn, partly because she has been forbidden to try Protection. But if there is one thing which it is safe to say of the Indian it is this: He likes to buy in a cheap market. Another thing is this. He is not exactly enthusiastic about seeing his brother Indian make a fortune at his expense. Add these two facts together, and you don't get high Protection.

In these notes I have recorded opinions from some Indians and one Englishman to the effect that English capital and trade would get fair treatment from an Indian Home Rule Government. That is assuming for the moment that such a Government could keep the country from falling to pieces. How do these assurances square with the recent action of Indian merchants in refusing to take delivery when the exchange turned against them? Well, you must realise that the Indian merchant was firmly persuaded that the Indian Government had deliberately manipulated the exchange in order to put his money into English pockets. It may seem incredible that any reasonable being should believe such a thing, but all through these notes I have been trying to make it clear that in his attitude towards his foreign Government the Indian is not quite sane. He is suffering from an acute mental disease caused by the pressure which that foreign Government inevitably imposes, sometimes upon his spiritual aspirations, oftener upon his material toes.

Under the influence of this disease the Indian merchant believed himself cheated and, believing himself cheated, he lost his temper and ran amuck. If the cause of the disease were removed by the attainment of Home Rule, then he would be likely to exhibit more patience. If you say that Home Rule might

be the origin of other and worse diseases, I am not ready to confute you.

Well, that is how things look to me, seen from Bombay. Up-country things have a way of looking different. I had better go and see.

## VIII

### THE MAHRATTA BRAHMINS

POONA, *May 27.*

**T**HIS is Poona, a city of 130,000 people. All the same, it is "up-country," "the mofussil." Ten minutes' walk takes us on to a country road, and there is a bullock bandy laden with cholam stalks (though they do not call these things bandies or cholam here), and there is the ryot himself driving his bullocks. He could tell us many things we want to know if only I could talk to him, but I don't know his language. Never mind. We will find a way round that difficulty later on.

I used to wonder how any Indian could ever have the same affection for his dry, dusty, sun-stricken land as we have for our country-side. But now I see the hot-weather green of the margosa and a clump of bamboos on the river bank and the great spaces beyond, and I find that after sixteen years these things mean something even to me, and I begin to understand that a man might have a feeling for this country if it were his own. "Vande Mataram!"

"Salve, magna parens frugum, Saturnia tellus,  
Magna Virum!"—

For this is Maharashtra, the country of Sivajee and the Peshwas, of Gokhale and Tilak, and Mr. Gandhi is in gaol close by.

I have been through the city and have been talking to all manner of people, extremists, moderates, and reactionaries. The first thing that strikes me is the

friendliness and "moderation" of the atmosphere. People are as friendly as in Bombay and much more "moderate." This is not exactly what you expect to find in the neighbourhood of the gaol in which India's chosen leader is shut up. There are two explanations for the phenomenon, and I will give them. First, for the "moderation." The most powerful stimulus to Indian nationalist feeling is contact with the outside world. The Indian who goes abroad sees that the normal status of a country is autonomy, and that his country is in an exceptional and somewhat humiliating position. In a big international port like Bombay educated people see this nearly as clearly as if they had themselves travelled abroad. But up country the Indian still regards the dependence of his country on Great Britain as normal, part of the natural order of things. He finds it easy to think of concessions, reforms, and progress, but it costs him an effort to grasp the idea of autonomy or independence. Very few in Poona seem to have made that effort. But contact with the outside world is increasing, and you had better be on the look out for its results.

Next as to the friendliness. Well, this is the country of the Mahrattas. Mr. Gandhi is a Gujerati, not a Mahratta. If the prisoner in Yeroda gaol were Mr. Tilak, should I find so much politeness in Poona streets? I doubt it. Indeed, a local reactionary explained to me the whole of the Mahratta Brahmins' lukewarmness towards Mr. Gandhi's movement in terms of Maharashtra's jealousy of this Gujerati interloper who has robbed Maharashtra of her traditional hegemony in Indian politics. I don't accept that explanation, but I agree that when a Mahratta



again takes the lead Maharashtra will be much less friendly and moderate than she is to-day.

Well, then, what is the fact regarding the Mahratta Nationalists' attitude towards Mr. Gandhi's Non-Co-operation programme? They make no secret about that. The Mahratta Brahmins pride themselves on being hard-headed practical men, not sentimentalists or idealists. They all along disliked Mr. Gandhi's programme, not because it was too extreme but because it was bad tactics. They wanted to go into the Council and use it as a lever for extracting further concessions. They were not going to co-operate unless the Government made it worth their while to do so. They meant to obstruct, cause deadlocks, and thereby extort more power. But they could not get Mr. Gandhi to accept this policy, and they saw that Mr. Gandhi had the country behind him. Rather than cause a split they followed Mr. Gandhi's lead reluctantly and half-heartedly, but loyally enough. The same was true of many of the Tamil Brahmin leaders in Madras.

The Mahratta Brahmin now sees that Mr. Gandhi's campaign has definitely failed. He thinks that he will soon be able to induce the country to accept the Mahratta programme. He does not want to appear disloyal to a fallen leader, so he will let a decent interval elapse before he begins to push publicly for the change. A very intelligent Non-Co-operator explained all this to me with perfect frankness. He added: "You will have an easy time for about a year while we are fighting among ourselves about the new plan of action. Then we shall come into the councils and insist on having our own way." He seemed pretty confident that the new programme

of action through the councils would enable him to win complete control of the Provincial Government at an early date. He also hoped to bring the central Government under partial control. But when I asked him about Dominion status and some of the questions that it will bring up for settlement—for instance, the composition of the army and relations with the Native States—he said: “It is too soon to consider these things yet. When we get so far we shall be able to solve these problems readily enough by the simple means of sitting down together with a mind to solve them. But I don’t see any prospect of pushing England to that point for some years yet.”

I asked him whether he did not think the Moderates would have to break with the Government of India over next year’s Budget unless there is a sensational cut in army expenditure. He said: “No. The Moderates will never break with the Government when it comes to action, whatever they may say. Why, their existence as a party depends on their co-operation with the Government.” I asked whether the stronger men would not feel compelled to leave their party and go over to his side. He would not go beyond “Perhaps.”

On this point some Poona Moderates, men of more than local importance, drew my attention to the fact that the next Budget will be followed by a general election. “Whatever we do about the next Budget we shall have to account for it a few months later to our constituents. That will stiffen our backs.”

I met in Poona another Non-Co-operator who interested me—a youngish man, rather shy, and unwilling to talk. Apparently he is prompter in action, for I found that he holds two important

executive posts by the goodwill of his fellow-citizens, Co-operators and Non-Co-operators. I asked him how he came to be a Non-Co-operator. The account he gave was something as follows :

He is a trained engineer. He was once in public service. When the Poona drainage scheme was being put through he interested himself in the work and noticed serious defects both in design and execution. He wrote and pointed out the defects. This led to an inquiry—into his conduct, but not into the conduct of the work. After five or six years the defects of the work have become apparent in the vital statistics and elsewhere, and Poona has the pleasure of paying for getting the job redone. From other sources I gather that this story is not entirely without foundation. He said this case is typical of a foreign Government's attitude towards popular criticism, and that is what has turned him into a Non-Co-operator.

I replied : " I'm afraid it is not only foreign Governments whose departments insist on having their names spelt with a big ' D.' I can imagine a Swaraj P.W.D. behaving in much the same way. And, as a matter of fact, under the reforms your Minister and the elected Legislative Council have control of local self-government and sanitation. So I don't see why you are non-co-operating. Wouldn't it be better to send a lot of rude men with loud voices to the Council and let them insist on your Minister using the big stick ? " He doubted whether the present Constitution puts the Minister into a position to use the big stick effectively, but on being pressed he admitted that he was another of those who are inclined to the view that the right policy is to go into the councils and there extort the power he

desired. He was a man of action, and he was very clear that what India wanted was the opportunity to make her own mistakes for herself and to learn from them. He did not believe in the guiding hand. If there were many like him India would get Swaraj soon, and make a success of it too.

Here I should say that anyone who visits Poona after a stay in other parts of India is likely to be struck by the outward and visible signs of practical capacity, energy, and public spirit. Such signs are the self-initiated and self-supporting institutions from the Ferguson College to the Deccan Gymkhana. Further, women occupy a position of freedom very unlike anything I have seen in other parts of India.

These things probably account for a fact which would otherwise have surprised me. I was talking politics to a local missionary, an experienced and prudent Scotchman, whose judgment is rated high by his neighbours, Indian and European alike. This man told me he had reached the conclusion that it is time to give full control of the provincial governments; indeed he was prepared to go a good deal farther, for he saw the drawbacks attached to half-measures. In estimating the importance of this opinion you must remember that missionaries, however friendly to India, are inclined to be cautious politically as they feel a special responsibility not only for their own flock but for the whole body of outcastes, who undoubtedly have reason to be apprehensive about the possible effects of Swaraj. I don't remember ever before meeting a missionary of a cautious turn of mind who was prepared to go so far. The exceptional public spirit of Poona explains why a Poona missionary is more willing to take risks.

## IX

### THE MODERATES OF MAHARASHTRA

POONA, *May 28.*

THE Moderates of Poona may be divided into two schools: those who have contact with the outer world and those who have not. The former hold much the same views as the Co-operators in Bombay. They want complete responsible self-government in the provinces and control over the Government of India finances. They want to see a start made with the Indianisation of the army. Compared with the Bombay Co-operators they lay less stress on fiscal autonomy and more on the Indianisation of the civil services. "It is better to face facts," one of them said. "When any European is appointed to any post we all say it would have been better to appoint an Indian. Besides, there is the financial difficulty. We simply cannot afford to pay the salaries you Europeans require." They are not very anxious to get rid of the men actually in service. They recognise that that would be either unjust or expensive. But they want to stop all recruiting of Europeans at once, except for a few men with special technical knowledge and experience.

The local Moderate who has little touch with the outside world has not thought much about the Government of India. He is clear that the time has come for complete provincial self-government, at

least in Bombay Presidency. He is not so certain that it might not be as well to keep the European official a bit longer.

These local Moderates have plenty of local knowledge. I questioned one of them, who struck me as both intelligent and frank, on some of the possible ill-effects of provincial self-government. He was clear that the Brahmins would have to come to terms with the non-Brahmins and make some sacrifices, but he thought his co-Brahmins had intelligence enough for this. As to the relations between Moham-medans and Hindus, he did not think that would cause serious difficulty in the Bombay Presidency, though he could see that in another province it might be very awkward for a Hindu Ministry if it were called upon to deal with a serious Hindu-Mohammedan riot arising out of the usual religious disputes, or with a Moplah outbreak or, worse still, with an incident like the suffocation of the Moplah prisoners in the train. I then asked him whether there was not a serious danger that a legislative council elected by small tax-paying ryots might be misled by its zeal for economy into cutting the pay of the minor Government officials, sub-magistrates, sub-judges, police constables, and the rest to such an extent as to restore full vigour to the old tradition of official corruption. He admitted there might be a tendency this way, but he thought the council would have enough common sense to prevent a serious relapse. He added that the present Government had been too generous and that the increases in pay given to the lower officers had been beyond their needs and beyond what the country could afford. Here I dare say he was right. The mistake arose out of the

difficulties of the present position. A foreign Government dare not risk discontent among the lower Government servants. Again, the salaries of the European officers have to be fixed exceedingly high to attract them out to India and to enable them to meet the expense of maintaining separate establishments for their wives and families in a temperate climate. These salaries are in themselves a not inconsiderable burden on India's finances. But their indirect effect is far more serious. For they set a standard whereby all Indian officials, high and low, measure their claims upon the public purse. Hence a tendency to the inflation of salaries which has spread downwards from the highest to the lowest of the innumerable Government posts in India.

None of the Moderates I have hitherto described appeared to be content with the reforms. They complained that they had failed to change the general attitude of the Government towards the people, and indeed I have heard officials regretting that the new Ministers assimilated the old Government point of view only too readily. But I am bound in honesty to admit that here in Poona I have met with a few people who profess whole-hearted approval of the reforms. Most of them are men who hold that whatever the Government does is right. Men of this type are often perfectly honest and shrewd in other matters. But unquestioning loyalty is part of their religion. Besides these loyalists there were two intellectual Moderates who wanted nothing more or less than the reforms have given. One was a schoolmaster, a sincere man of no great pretensions. The other was an able and experienced man. He took a keen intellectual pleasure in exposing

the follies and inconsistencies in Non-Co-operative theory and practice. On behalf of the reforms he contented himself with saying: "I am one of those who believe with the late Mr. Gokhale that the destinies of England and India are inseparably linked, and that there can be no real conflict between the interests of the two countries. The gulf between the Hindu and the Mohammedan and our other factions will disable us from managing our own affairs for many years to come. The present generation thinks otherwise, but that is a passing madness. In five years' time they will see their mistake and bring up their children to be wiser than themselves."

Was he sincere? I am not sure that he was not. But compare his doctrine with that which I heard from a little man getting on in years but young in spirit, wavering between Co-operation and Non-Co-operation, a temperance worker and an enthusiast, a live wire fretting at the inertia of those who lived around him. This man said: "We know you English are just judges between us Indians when your own interests are not concerned. But when your own interests are concerned, are you just judges then? It is not in human nature. Tell me honestly. Can it be right for one country to rule over another? I do not say, as some do, that your interests are always opposed to ours. But sometimes our interests are opposed. Are you just judges then? You know you are not. It can never be right that one country should bear rule over another. The present arrangement is unnatural. It should be ended as soon as possible."

Can you doubt which doctrine will be accepted in India five years hence? I should add that neither



this man nor any other Indian I have met with yet professed or appeared to desire anything more than Dominion status, though I am told there is already in existence a school which is active in preaching separation from the Empire. I questioned this man about the possibility of a physical-force movement if England decided not to budge till the ten-year period prescribed in the Reforms Act has run its course. He answered with emotion : " Please God, England will save us from that sin. But if nothing is done, how can we be answerable for our young men ? "

Maharashtra's history shows that she has little to learn from other countries about the use of force, so I questioned another Poona man, a cool and experienced politician, on the same point. The answer I got was this : " It is, of course, possible that a physical-force movement may emerge. But that could only come under an entirely new set of leaders. Our old leaders would have nothing to do with it. And you must remember that the use of physical force shocks us Indians far more than it does you Europeans."

## X

### THE NON-BRAHMINS OF THE DECCAN

POONA, *May 28.*

**B**ESIDES the Non-Co-operators and the Moderates there is another party in Maharashtra, the Non-Brahmin. Outside Bombay and Madras this party can hardly be said to exist. In Madras it has secured a majority in the Legislative Council and is effectively dominating the policy of Government. Here in Maharashtra it is not yet so powerful, though some regard it as a growing force likely to develop into an agrarian party in opposition to the industrial and mercantile interests of Bombay. At present it draws its strength from an uprising of the Mahratta cultivators against the privileged position claimed by the Brahmin in social and religious matters and against the monopoly which he has secured in education and in Government service. His position as a landlord in certain tracts has also been assailed. I came across two or three of the local Non-Brahmin champions. They were men of little education and they had some difficulty in expressing themselves in English. None the less I found them very interesting. They were strong supporters of the British connection, but, to my surprise, they too insist that the councils should now get complete control of the provincial governments. Asked whether this would not mean a Brahmin oligarchy, they

cited the example of Madras and explained that they were satisfied of their ability to use their voting power effectively. I do not think that this is yet the generally accepted view among Non-Brahmins, but it agrees with what a local Non-Co-operator told me. He said that the Non-Co-operators could sweep the towns (they have just got a large majority in the Poona municipal elections), but he thought the Non-Brahmins would win in the rural tracts of Maharashtra.

These Non-Brahmins were the first people I met who seemed able to give any clue to help me find out what is in the mind of the ryot. The Brahmins, Co-operators and Non-Co-operators, are still inclined to leave the ryot out of their accounts, agreeing that he has an admiration for Mr. Gandhi's saintly character but denying that he has any real interest in politics. The tale told by these Non-Brahmins was different. It carried more conviction to my mind, especially as I ascertained that the men I was speaking with came from country villages where their families are still working the land. They said : " The Deccan ryot has been passing through a cycle of very bad years and therefore finds it very hard to make both ends meet. But that doesn't mean that he has no time to think of anything else. For one thing, it is true that he reveres Mr. Gandhi as a saint and that it hurts him to think of his saint in gaol. But it is not so much of that that he is thinking. He is thinking about education. Our Non-Brahmin movement is spreading through the villages, and the ryot is beginning to see that if he is to stand up to the Brahmin he must have education. So he is asking for schools in all villages. And there is

another thing that he is talking about in his villages ; that is retrenchment. The newspapers are reaching his villages, and they are teaching him to ask what becomes of the land tax he is paying. He hears that all the taxes are being spent on fat salaries for Europeans and Brahmins in Bombay, and that there are four Executive Councillors and three Ministers doing the work that three men did before. He asks why the money is not spent on new schools, new roads, and new bridges in the villages."

That sounds to me the sort of question the ryot would be likely to ask. The ryot is very like the ratepayer. He doesn't like paying, and if he has to pay, he likes the money to be spent on something that he can see with his own eyes and understand. I can even believe what these men told me, that the ryot might now be persuaded to pay for a village school if care were taken to adjust the school season and the school course to the needs of an agricultural village.

## XI

### THE DEPRESSED CLASSES IN MAHARASHTRA

POONA, *May* 28.

I WAS talking to quite a sensible and well-informed Indian in Bombay and questioning him regarding some of the difficulties in the way of complete provincial self-government. I asked about the untouchables and criminal tribes. He assured me there were no criminal tribes in the Bombay Presidency, and as to the untouchables, they were negligible as there were but few of them, not more than are required to do the dirty work of the Presidency—sweeping, scavenging, etc.

I thought this sounded a little curious and I made a note "to refer to the census reports or gazetteers." But even this was unnecessary. That evening, going in to dine at my hotel, I found my table already occupied by a man whose outside reminded me of something I had seen before and was glad to see again. A couple of questions revealed the forest officer on tour, and I had a tiger, three panthers, and a sixteen-foot python for dinner—quite a pleasant change after a surfeit of fiscal autonomy and Government of India finance. In the course of conversation the forest officer happened to mention that he had recently been transacting business with a person who had killed five men. For the first four he had used his bow and arrows. But the fifth was a Government official, and he had felt it proper to borrow a gun for

the occasion just to show his respect for the Sircar. There was no brutality nor nasty political bigotry about these killings. The man was a very decent fellow. It was merely the sporting instinct a little misdirected. There had been some difficulty in getting the Court to see matters in a suitable light, but apparently the thing had been done, for, if I understood the forest officer aright, the man is now a member of a criminal tribe settlement which is being persuaded to earn a livelihood by forest work for the Forest Department. I told the forest officer how I had heard that there were no criminal tribes in the Presidency. "Criminal tribes! We have not only criminal tribes; we have the greatest living expert on the treatment of criminal tribes. Did you never hear of —, an I.C.S. man?" Then I remembered that eighteen months back I had been hearing of this man and his work from a lady missionary who had been invalided after a period of work done for him in a criminal tribe settlement. And when I came to think of it it seemed to me that that settlement, too, must have been somewhere in the Bombay Presidency. So you see that even a very intelligent Indian living in the Presidency town may not know quite all there is to be known about the mofussil. I think we may take it that any new Constitution must find a place for criminal tribes and jungle tribes. To be perfectly frank, I think these people are likely to be even worse off under a Swaraj Constitution than they are under the present regime. But it is hardly fair to ask civilised India to wait for the uplift (or extermination) of these scattered remnants of lower races.

As for the untouchables, that is a more serious

problem, even in the Bombay Presidency. I had not been long in Poona before I met the local Director of Agriculture, who knows as much as any man in India about village conditions in Maharashtra. I asked him whether it was true that there were few untouchables in this Presidency beyond those needed for the dirty work. He said: "No. The problem here is, of course, not so appalling as you know it in Madras. All the same, a considerable percentage of the ordinary agricultural labourers are untouchables and their status or lack of status is a very serious evil." From him I got passed on to an Indian gentleman, a non-Brahmin, the head of the local Depressed Classes Mission—a Hindu mission, not a Christian mission, I should explain. This man has devoted himself for many years to work for the untouchables, and he lives in the middle of an "untouchable" settlement, where the untouchable may still be seen in all his ancient squalor, housed in huts wholly roofed and partly walled with the rusty sides of old kerosene oil tins, not the best imaginable protection from the sun. To get at the mind of an uneducated untouchable through an interpreter is too hard a task for me, so I had to content myself with questioning the head of the Mission.

He proved to be another of those non-Brahmins who want complete provincial self-government. I asked him how this would affect the interest of his charges. He said that the old system had done very little for them, and that he could not truthfully say that he expected anything better from the new. Still, he thought that the non-Brahmin and untouchable would coalesce against the Brahmin. I mentioned that I had heard that once in Pondicherry the

Brahmin had formed an unholy political alliance with the untouchable against the non-Brahmin. He said this might happen again, but, even so, the untouchable at least would be a gainer. He would get a *quid pro quo*. Asked whether Mr. Gandhi had really succeeded in awakening the Hindu conscience in regard to the untouchable, he was unwilling to admit that there was a real awakening. I could not get him to go farther than to give assent to the following proposition: "Twenty years ago an orthodox Hindu did not hesitate to say in public that the untouchables should be kept in their proper place. To-day few would be bold enough to say this in public without attaching a great many qualifications and explanations to the pronouncement."

I next asked him whether the untouchable in Bombay had progressed far enough to understand his position and to be ready to fight to retain and extend the few rights which have been won for him or by him. He did not think that the untouchable in Bombay had yet reached this point. He judged from what he had heard and seen that the untouchable in Madras is wider awake and in a more pugnacious mood. He admitted that it would be very difficult to secure satisfactory representation for the untouchables in the Legislative Council either by election or nomination, though he thought that if elections were tried the untouchable would ultimately learn by bitter experience how to protect himself.

On the whole, he would not admit that the untouchable difficulty was a valid reason for refusing to give the Legislative Council immediate and complete control in the Provinces. But I am afraid the untouchable in Madras thinks otherwise.



## XII

### MR. GANDHI'S "NO LAND TAX" CAMPAIGN IN BARDOLI

GUJERAT, *June 8.*

IN Poona as in Bombay there was plenty of strong Nationalist feeling to be found, but it is not merely to this, but to the true spirit of Gandhian non-co-operation, that India looks, or once looked, for salvation. Wishing to see the workings of this spirit where it is strongest and purest, I made up my mind to go to Mr. Gandhi's own country, Gujerat, and to the taluk of Bardoli, which he selected for the post of honour and danger in the decisive battle with the bureaucracy which was to have been fought in the spring of 1922.

Bardoli is a country village with some 5,000 inhabitants. It is the official headquarters of the Bardoli taluk, a rural tract containing a couple of hundred square miles and some 60,000 inhabitants. According to Mr. Gandhi's plan, the people of Bardoli were to clothe themselves in white khaddar—hand-woven cloth made of hand-spun yarn. They were to open their hearts, their houses, and their schools to the untouchables, and to allow them to draw water from the village well. They were to put a stop to the use of intoxicating liquor, to boycott Government schools and law courts, and to set up national schools and arbitration courts in their place. Having thus purified their souls, they were to take the final step of refusing to pay the land tax which falls due on

their lands in the spring. Rather than pay they were peacefully to permit the officers of Government to sell away their ancestral lands. Bardoli's example was to be followed after a greater or less interval throughout the length and breadth of India, till the bureaucracy, brought to a sense of sin, should make confession with a humble and contrite heart and admit that India had by her own exertions achieved complete and immediate Swaraj. Then they were all to live happily ever afterwards.

You see the plan asks a good deal of human nature. Mr. Gandhi himself recognised the need for intensive preparation. For some months much of his own personal attention and a great share of the whole energy of the non-co-operative movement were devoted to raising the people of the Bardoli taluk to the required level of sanctity. At length the thing was done, or at least the local leaders reported that the thing was done, and the final step was on the point of being taken, when Mr. Gandhi suddenly called the show off on hearing that a police post had been massacred in another part of India by a band of non-co-operators who had insufficiently understood the doctrine of non-violence.

Well, I am in Bardoli now, and I see greater reason than ever to admire Mr. Gandhi's sincerity and sanctity. Who but a saint would have chosen this taluk and the people of this taluk to lead the fight against the Government?

If you searched all India you would be hard put to it to find a more prosperous taluk, inhabited by a more inoffensive people. ("Innocent" my informants called them.) I never saw a taluk where grievances were fewer or relations between the people and

the officers of Government were easier. There is no irrigation to give rise to irrigation disputes, but the soil is fertile and the rainfall tolerably trustworthy. The principal crop is cotton, and the ryots have benefited by the rise in cotton prices. There are no big landlords to oppress the tenant; the cultivator as a rule holds his land direct from Government. The land tax is light—about five rupees for an acre, which can be sublet for twenty rupees, so a landholder told me. This land tax was settled twenty-five years ago. There are still five years to run before it can be altered. The commonest and most dangerous source of discontent in India is the pressure of the population on the land. But here this pressure has hardly yet begun to make itself felt. The ryot cannot even complain of a shortage of labour, for besides the untouchables there are here the Kali Paraj, "the black people," the aborigines, a happy-go-lucky, thriftless race ready to hire themselves out for the day or for life to anyone who will put them in a position to pay for a drink of toddy or to meet the cost of getting married.

The ryots themselves are good cultivators, a peace-loving, docile people. They are not litigious or quarrelsome, but they are attached to their lands. Even before Mr. Gandhi's advent they never used to go to law, so I am told, except over boundary disputes. In such disputes they would sacrifice their whole fortune rather than give up a foot of land.

These are the people whom Mr. Gandhi asked to refuse to pay their land tax and to allow their lands to be sold away to, say, Parsi speculators from Bombay. And all for what? To get Swaraj. What is Swaraj to them? There is no tradition of Swaraj

in this country as there is in the Punjab, in Maharashtra, or even in the Dravidian countries of the south.

Why, then, did Mr. Gandhi select this taluk for his "No Land Tax" campaign? Why did he not choose, say, the neighbouring region of Maharashtra, where the cultivators are a tough and independent race, so impoverished by a cycle of bad seasons that the land tax is now a real thorn in their flesh, so burdened by debt that to risk the loss of their lands might seem to many no more than a new way of settling their old account with the money-lender?

Any politician could see that to have a chance of success the no-rent campaign should be launched in any region in India rather than in Gujerat.

But Mr. Gandhi cared much more for non-violence than for success. He knew that he could not hope to keep Maharashtra to peaceful methods. But in Bardoli he believed that he could guarantee both non-violence and staunchness, partly because he knew the peace-loving and docile disposition of the people, partly because there were in the taluk a number of returned emigrants who had fought by his side in the passive resistance movement in South Africa. He had confidence in the virtue, staunchness, and loyalty of these veterans, and I am told that his confidence was not misplaced.

It was undoubtedly the presence of these South Africans in the taluk that decided Mr. Gandhi's choice. There cannot, however, have been more than 1,000 of them at the outside. One thousand resolute men using force or threats could do a great deal to influence the decision of the 60,000 people in Bardoli. But these men were forbidden to use force or threats. They were to use moral influence

only to persuade some thousands of landholders to leave their ancestral lands to be sold rather than pay a light and customary tax when their pockets were full of money, and they were, above all things, to impress upon these landholders that it was their duty to love and forgive and on no account to beat the men who came to buy their land. Since the days of William Smith O'Brien were there ever such tactics? What would have happened if Mr. Gandhi had not called the movement off on hearing of the massacre at Chauri Chaura?

The Non-Co-operators of course say that the ryots would have faced the music. The great majority of Co-operators and officials are confident that the final scene would have been a farce. I hear stories of ryots who had sold away their lands to cousins or servants on the understanding that the buyer should pay the land tax and sell back the land when all the fuss was over. Other ryots were ready to die a thousand deaths rather than pay the land tax. But if the distraining officer had chanced to see the house door open, and if on stepping in he had found the exact amount of the land tax due, plus interest on arrears and sixpence for the distraint fee, lying in a neat pile on what serves for the ryot's hall table, why, then, that would have been a very fortunate coincidence and by no means the ryot's fault.

So unkindly Moderates talk. One wiser and more experienced man viewed the chances something like this, if I understood him aright:

Except for a few staunch South African veterans the rest of the ryots would probably have paid up at the first show of pressure.

The Non-Co-operators' work was not thorough.

Many small villages were left untouched. No serious effort was made to influence the Kali Paraj, who are nearly half the population and own a good deal of the land in the remoter parts of the taluk. Mr. Gandhi's followers supplied him with very untrustworthy information or he would never have risked such a fiasco as Bardoli might have seen. I believe at the end he realised that his followers were far too sanguine, and probably this influenced him sub-consciously in deciding to call a halt on hearing the news from Chauri Chaura.

All the same, you never can be quite sure. The Bardoli ryot is a very well-intentioned person. He did most sincerely revere and worship Mr. Gandhi as his god, and though he found his god decidedly exacting and sometimes, as it seemed to him (e.g. in the matter of the untouchables), even a little unreasonable, yet he was prepared to go a long way to please him, and just how far he would have gone no one now will ever know.

One thing is certain. The officials never thought it necessary to take any very drastic measures to meet the campaign in Bardoli.

On the other side the people never went to extremes in their efforts to boycott and isolate the officials. Indian officers have told me (and what they say is corroborated by what I have heard from Non-Co-operators) that they found it impossible to hire carts for touring during the height of the campaign. Barbers and washermen (necessaries, not luxuries, to the Indian) would not serve them in out-of-the-way villages. Even in the village of Bardoli itself the shops refused for a few days to sell to them, and they had to get their supplies from a town twenty

miles away. But the boycott was not pressed with anything like the rigour which certain Mohammedan communities have shown towards those of their co-religionists who venture to assert the right of private judgment. One may say that in Bardoli gloves were never taken off on either side, and that to-day the relations between the officials and the people are, if not cordial, at least free from angry memories. Passing through the village and in the neighbouring country I met with no rudeness and sometimes got a friendly salutation, though I am generally supposed to be a new brand of Government official. The men I met talked without bitterness even on the subject of Mr. Gandhi's imprisonment, and they were all careful to impress on me that they do not wish Europeans to leave the country but to live among them as brothers. I then asked them what salaries they are prepared to give these brothers if they desire to serve them as collectors of districts. The answer I get is "Rupees 200 or 300 a month." Say £250 a year !

## XIII

### THE BARDOLI RYOT AND SWARAJ

GUJERAT, *June 10.*

**I**N Bardoli I was lucky enough to meet in the village a "sympathetic" Gujarati-knowing missionary and an intelligent young Indian graduate with advanced political views. We agreed to drive out together into the country and see what we could get out of any ryots we might find in the villages along the road. We all knew enough of India to have unlimited faith in the affability of the ryot.

So we set out on our hunt, and the first thing we did find was an intelligent and venerable-looking old gentleman striding across country. Mistaking him for a prosperous landowner, we hailed him, but were disappointed to meet only a retired schoolmaster. Still as he was intelligent and evidently anxious to talk, we thought it a pity to break off the acquaintance. So we sat down by the roadside and began to ask about the views of his neighbours. Before long a bullock cart drove up in which were seated three unmistakable ryots. An invitation to stop and talk was accepted with very little reluctance. The men proved to be Kunbis—that is, members of the leading cultivating caste of the taluk. One of them was a returned South African, but he was none the less a true ryot. Neither he nor the other two appeared to have any English.

Our talk showed me that the ryots of Bardoli



taluk are really interested in politics, and that they are not mere parrots. They have taken in and digested Mr. Gandhi's teaching, adapting it in the process to suit their own needs and temperaments.

They were all quite clear that they would have refused to pay their land tax if Mr. Gandhi had not changed his mind. But they were not prepared to lose their lands. "Who would have dared to buy them?" they asked. When it was suggested that Parsis from Bombay might have been glad to buy, they said they would have put the Parsis to much trouble before yielding up possession of their lands. Very natural, but not exactly what Mr. Gandhi meant by non-violence.

Asked whether the land tax was heavy, they said: "Yes, but if Mahatma Gandhi fixed the tax we would pay even more." Asked why, then, they should refuse to pay the tax, they mentioned some local grievances entirely trivial in their nature.

When it was pointed out that these were hardly adequate reasons for so serious a decision one man broke out: "The fact is you Englishmen come to India without passports. You can go anywhere without passports. In the same way we Indians want to be able to go to South Africa or any country without passports. That is why we want Swaraj."

I said that I feared this was just what Swaraj could not do for them. "Even when you have Swaraj the South Africans will not be any the more willing to admit you into their country."

They thought otherwise. They felt that if they had Swaraj other nations would recognise their claims to equal status. I pointed to the cases of China and Japan, but in vain.

They next insisted on the need for industrial education, for spinning their own yarn and weaving their own cloth. They hope thus to keep their own people employed, to prevent money from going out of the country to England, and to make themselves independent of foreign help.

This is the point upon which the local leaders are now concentrating their attention, so we probably got the words of the last lecture they had heard, but the doctrine certainly appeals to their reason and to their racial pride, and one hears it from every soul in Bardoli.

We next asked whether the collector and superintendent of police should be Europeans or Indians. They said that the Europeans were fairer, but that the Indians might be expected to know the needs of the people better. On the whole, they were for complete and immediate Swaraj.

We then asked them whether they knew in what state the country was two hundred years ago; how the Mahrattas used to come and sack Surat and the country round about, while the Afghans and Persians were breaking through the Punjab, and there were wars in every part of India. Was there no fear that such a state of things might recur?

To our great surprise the ryots answered with evident earnestness, "Yes, they were afraid of this. The blackness might come back." But they put their faith in Mahatma Gandhi's saying that India could not win Swaraj till she was fit for it. So they hoped that no harm would come.

Here we had, to my regret, to break off. These men were the first young Indians I have met who took seriously the danger of a relapse into the chaos

of the eighteenth century. I do not know what made them sensitive to the suggestion. The great majority of the Indians seem to think "This is now the twentieth century. Men have grown civilised. They will never again dream of settling their differences by force. Wars in Europe? We have heard there was a war there. But that is different. And, anyhow, we Indians are naturally a non-violent people."

Driving on, we came to a small village and tried to start a conversation with the ryots we found there. They told us that "they were prepared to do whatever Mahatma Gandhi bade them, as they were convinced that he was their best friend. Why he wanted them to withhold their land tax they did not know. We could ask the leaders about that. There were two parties among the ryots in the taluk. One of them was against refusing to pay the land tax." Here an old ryot broke in, saying that "he had always been against refusing to pay. Their troubles were not the fault of the Sircar. It was the black man (i.e. the Indian official) who spoilt all."

We could not get much more out of these people, who were below the average in intelligence, so we drove on till we came to a rich village, inhabited by Brahmins who own the land but do not work it with their own hands. Being Brahmins, these people are, of course, great politicians and educated men, though they know no English. One of them invited us into his house. We sat down, and a good part of the village dropped in to assist at the discussion. They are followers of Mr. Gandhi. They understand his doctrines and can argue about them. They want Swaraj at once. They see no danger of a return to

the age of internal warfare. They see no need for European officers. The district officers should be controlled by local councils of ryots. This would be a guarantee against corruption and oppression. "If the district officials are subject to the control of the ryot, who will stand up for the interests of the untouchables and the Kali Paraj?" we asked. They were confident that the ryot would never do these people any wrong. Their great point was that all the taxes raised in the taluk should be spent in the taluk.

"Then what about the army?" we asked. An army was unnecessary. All the boys should have military training at school, and there should be a local militia in each taluk. On hearing news of an Afghan invasion the Bardoli militia would set out for the frontier. Asked whether it is easier to mend a torn cloth or to keep it from being torn, they explained that they relied chiefly on maintaining amicable relations with their neighbours.

We next asked whether it was the British Government they distrusted or only the local officers. They replied that they distrusted the whole system from top to bottom. I asked what about their own collector whom I had met. Did they distrust him?

Here I must break my rule not to speak of officers now in service. From what I have heard from Europeans and Indians, and from what I have seen myself, I judge that if there is one civilian in India who has earned a good word from the ryot whom he serves, it is the present Collector of Surat, an Ulster man.

But no good word would these men give him. They said: "It is true he speaks us fair, but it is only

words. Why, since he became Collector the postage rates have doubled." We said that it was hardly fair to blame the Collector for that. They said they did blame him all the same, because he had not written to tell the Government that the ryots were too poor to bear this new burden.

Then I remembered what an Indian once said to me. "You Europeans do not know how to treat your servants. When they do good work you praise them. That gives them swelled heads. We know better. However good the work a man does, we always find something to blame in it. We think that makes the man work harder." He knew his countrymen, that man, I thought.

We asked in what ways the present Government was doing them wrong. They said that all the ryot's money was being sent home to England in the shape of high salaries for big officials. They complained, too, of the lack of industrial education and they wanted protection against foreign cloth. They told us the old story about the East India Company cutting off the weavers' thumbs to prevent them from competing with Lancashire. This is the third time I have heard this story in the last month, once from a tailor, once from an Indian lady politician, and the third time from these ryots.<sup>1</sup> The origin of the story is roughly as follows :

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the East India Company made some efforts to stimulate Indian silk production in the interests of its own finances. A certain Mr. Bolts, a gentleman with a somewhat doubtful reputation and a quite definite dislike for the East India Company, printed an attack

<sup>1</sup> I heard it again two or three times in Bengal.

on the Company's proceedings. After making numerous allegations regarding the malpractices of the company's servants in their dealings with Indian artisans who worked for the Company, he added that the silk winders were treated with such injustice that instances were known of men cutting off their own thumbs to save themselves from being compelled to wind silk.

In this, its original, form the story is neither very credible nor very inspiring. It has therefore been subjected to a process of adaptation. In the form in which I heard it it has undoubtedly a very useful effect in stimulating Nationalist feeling.

## XIV

### THE BARDOLI RYOT AND SWARAJ

GUJERAT, *June 10.*

**T**O return to the ryot of Bardoli. I made another expedition the next day along another country road. This time I was in company with the Mamlatdar—that is, the chief Government official in the taluk, an Indian graduate of long experience.

Our objective was one of the local strongholds of Non-Co-operation. The Mamlatdar had sent word ahead asking the ryots to meet us. On the way we stopped, at my request, and visited a little village where we were not expected. To my surprise we found it entirely untouched by Non-Co-operation. There was no khaddar to be seen and not a spinning wheel in the place. The only ryot at home was quite clear that neither he nor the other ryots in this village had ever agreed to refuse payment of the land tax, nor did they want Swaraj.

We went with him to see the “untouchables”—field labourers and village servants. The cloth they wore was mill cloth, not khaddar. They had bought it only a month back. They bought mill cloth because they had always been accustomed to do so. They did not know whether khaddar was cheaper. They had heard that Mahatma Gandhi was telling people not to pay land tax, but they had decided to pay because their lands were held by them from time

immemorial subject to a favourable quit-rent in return for certain services which they were bound to render, and it would spoil the honour of their caste to lose these lands. They had heard that Mahatma Gandhi was telling the caste ryot that he should touch them and admit them into the schools. But they did not desire this. It would be a sin for them to touch a caste man.

This confirms what Non-Co-operating ryots have told me, that, having with difficulty overcome their own scruples about touching an "untouchable," they find still greater difficulty in surmounting the "untouchables' " scruples about being touched.

Had not the Mahatma Gandhi advised them to give up drink ?

Yes, but they did not drink often ; only on festive occasions, when they had to treat their friends.

"What can we give them but toddy ? "

"Tea," I suggested. But they had no milk or sugar. On being cross-questioned they admitted that they did sometimes use tea when they could not get toddy.

Personally I think that the one faint hope of inducing these "untouchables" to give up alcohol lies in substituting tea. But unluckily, Mr. Gandhi once denounced tea as hardly less sinful than alcohol, and his followers still regard it with suspicion on three grounds :

Firstly, because it is too violent a stimulant for the Indian.

Secondly, because it leads grown men to drink the milk which should be reserved for the children.

Thirdly, because it puts money in the pockets of white planters.



I am glad to say that the Non-Co-operators no longer carry their objections so far as to abstain from drinking tea themselves, but they still seem doubtful about the propriety of persuading the labouring classes to substitute tea for toddy.

It is a pity, for it is agreed on all sides that the Non-Co-operators' own plan for promoting temperance has had very little permanent effect, least of all in Bardoli. Picketing the drink-shops led to violence, and had to be dropped. No other method was substituted for it. The temperance campaign in Bardoli is showing no signs of life, though the Kali Paraj are notoriously heavy drinkers. In the first toddy-shop I visited in Gujerat there were men wearing the Gandhi cap, and they were drinking, not picketing.

Saying good-bye to the "untouchables" we drove on to the village which had been warned of our coming. The Non-Co-operators of the place had organised a very effective demonstration for our benefit. When we arrived there was no one to meet us except the official village headman and the son of the Parsi liquor shopkeeper. The other villagers abstained from meeting us in public, the Mamlatdar being a representative of the "Satanic Government."

But when we went into a house the ryots flocked in, and were quite ready to sit down and talk to us. They showed neither fear nor distrust of the Mamlatdar, who was good enough to act as my interpreter along with an English-knowing Non-Co-operator whom we found visiting the village.

These ryots were Kunbi cultivators, not Brahmins, but they held much the same opinions as I had found in the Brahmin village on the previous day. They attacked me with vigour on the subject of Mr.

Gandhi's imprisonment. It was not till I came to the ryot that I found anyone who seemed to regard this as anything but a move in the game of politics. These people showed some emotion in speaking of it. They seemed to feel it as something like an insult to their religion. Yet even here the feeling was nothing like as strong as I had expected to find it—nowhere near the exploding point.

The fact is that, long before the Government struck, Mr. Gandhi by his bad tactics had frittered away the immense forces of popular enthusiasm and popular discontent which had once been at his disposal. He would not use those forces to the full because he knew that they were not thoroughly disciplined, that they would escape from his control and work much mischief. He tried to discipline his forces by setting them a number of impracticable tasks, the universal reinstatement of the spinning wheel, the setting up of a separate system of national education, the abolition of "untouchability," the withholding of taxes in a single taluk, and the rest.

No followers could stand such treatment. Even among the ryots of Bardoli taluk the sorrow felt at the news of Mr. Gandhi's imprisonment is said to have been tinged with a shade of relief. Among the cloth dealers in a neighbouring town the relief felt was scarcely tinged by sorrow. At least every available scrap of foreign cloth was bought up within twenty-four hours of the receipt of the news. So I hear on pretty good authority.

I tried to make out whether the ryots in this village think of Swaraj as something that is likely to come in the near future. Apparently they do not. But they are dead against sending representatives to the

Legislative Council or co-operating with the Government in any other way. They look forward to an indefinite period of Non-Co-operation between Government and the ryot, and they do not see that this must mean the ruin of both.

Their leaders are equally blind. The orthodox Non-Co-operative faith is that the spirit of India will be purified by Non-Co-operation as by fire. All very well for her spirit, but what about her mind and her body? One can see before one's eyes the education of the next generation being sacrificed. The beneficent activities of Government—for example, the work of the Agricultural Department—are hampered, and I greatly fear the *moral* of the Indian services is being ruined from the bottom upwards.

It is generally admitted that the standard of honesty among the subordinate Indian officials had been steadily rising during the twenty years that preceded the dawn of Non-Co-operation. But now an Indian official may at any moment find himself looked upon and treated as a traitor to his country. Amidst the clamour that is so often raised against him it is hard for the superior officers to distinguish between the true charges and the false. The guilty may escape and the innocent incur censure. Naturally the Indian subordinate is tempted to say, "If my life brings neither comfort nor honour, let me at least grow rich."

## XV

### THE BARDOLI RYOT

GUJERAT, *June 12.*

**T**HERE are many parts of India in which the ryot has a hard struggle for existence, but in Bardoli he is a prosperous man, and I found him very like his cousins whom I have known in rich districts further south.

He is quite as intelligent and capable of thinking for himself as an average English voter. He is a master of his own trade—agriculture. He understands the interests of his own village. He is a shrewd judge of anything within his own experience. But his only knowledge of the outside world is derived from some “Nationalist” vernacular newspaper. In his own world he has no superior and nothing to fear.

The natural consequence is that he is full of self-conceit and absolutely confident of his ability to regulate the affairs of the country much better than its present governors do.

He sees so clearly what he wants, and his wants seem to him so modest. He merely wants the land tax reduced and better roads and better education at the Sircar’s expense. He wants a reduction in the price of everything he buys and an increase in the price of everything he sells.

He would prohibit the export of wheat and so

bring down its price. He does not grow wheat, but he does eat it. Cotton he grows to sell, so the export of cotton should continue, and if the price falls too low the Government should step in and buy the crop.

He thinks it is the plain duty of the Government to arrange all these little things for him. He has been wanting these things for years and years, yet nothing has been done. Mahatma Gandhi was evidently right in advising him not to co-operate with a Government which is so unsympathetic that it will not even promise miracles. He had heard before of the wrongs done to his countrymen in the Punjab. Now in Bardoli too the Government has shown itself in its true colours by putting his saint, Mahatma Gandhi, in gaol. He will have nothing more to do with it or with its officers.

Can anything be done to win back the co-operation of these people? I asked the ryots themselves the question, and got from them the stock answer :

“ Right the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs and give us Swaraj.” In other words, “ Retire from India and cease to seek to co-operate with us.”

Could we get their goodwill on any other terms? I asked a local Indian official, an experienced man who knew these ryots.

He was pessimistic about it. “ If they were left to themselves they would come back to us slowly. But then there are plenty of people whose business it is to see that they are not left to themselves.”

Then, if they will not co-operate with us, are they fit to manage their own affairs?

Well, Gujerat is an easy country to govern, being peaceful and prosperous. So far as his own local interests are concerned, the ryot would learn to look after them every bit as well as we do. So long as economic conditions were favourable he would treat the "untouchables" and his serfs, the Kali Paraj, humanely enough—that is, humanely enough to satisfy them or you or me, though not perhaps humanely enough to satisfy Mr. Gandhi or Mr. C. F. Andrews.

But the trouble will begin when it comes to persuading the ryot to pay his contribution to an all-India service, whether it is university education, agricultural research, or the upkeep of an army on a distant frontier. He does not like to pay for what he cannot see. He will always vote for the man who promises to reduce taxation, or, in other words, to get him off his share of the expense. I put this once to a non-Co-operating politician, an experienced and somewhat cynical man.

He said, "Yes, of course, but what harm? When there is an election two rogues will stand for the seat. Each will promise to reduce taxation. One of the two will be elected. As soon as he is safe in the council he will act like an honest man and vote the money the country requires. That sometimes happens in your country too, I think."

Perhaps; but the ryot has been taught to distrust the British Raj and to withhold his land tax. He will be apt to take up the same attitude towards the new Raj when he finds it does not fulfil his impossible expectations. He will start setting up local independent ryots, soviets, and India will fall to pieces.

That was what came into my mind when I talked

with the Bardoli ryot. I could not see him making a success of the government of India. On the other hand, I feared that he was both able and willing to make it impossible for us to give him a decent government.

## XVI

### MR. GANDHI'S INFLUENCE ON INDIAN STUDENTS

GUJERAT, *June 13.*

**W**HEREVER I go I am told that at least ninety per cent. of the students are in sympathy with the Non-Co-operation movement.

A teacher at one famous college traditionally attached to the "moderate" view told me that he had not been able to persuade a single student to speak against Non-Co-operation in the college debating society. Luckily his admiration for Mr. Gandhi rarely carries the student to extremities. He has too much common sense to give up his education, and the fall in the attendance in the co-operating schools and colleges is, though much more than the country can afford, much less than the Non-Co-operators once expected.

At Bardoli and in Surat I fell in with a number of Indian students. Most of them were home for their holidays from Government colleges in various parts of the Presidency. Two of them, and these were not the worst, either in character or intellect, were boys who had given up their education to serve the cause of Non-Co-operation.

All were interesting. There is no doubt about the depth or sincerity of their admiration for Mr. Gandhi, though I am glad to say some of the elder boys were inclined to assert the right of private judgment and felt at liberty to accept or reject the different articles



in the Non-Co-operative creed as might seem best to them.

They all accept Mr. Gandhi's teaching regarding temperance and the simple life. They are all for Swadeshi and the wearing of khaddar, though some doubt whether students should be required to spend their time spinning when they might be learning chemistry. They are all for the Indianisation of the services and for complete Swaraj, but some of them venture to think that to go into the Councils is the best way to attain these ends.

They all have what seems to me an exaggerated idea of the value and possibilities of technical and industrial education. They all condemn the present system of education as "too literary," "calculated to produce a slave mentality," etc. I tell them the only sign of a slave mentality I can see in them is their readiness to repeat this parrot cry, that it is their politicians, not their teachers,<sup>1</sup> who are guilty of enslaving their minds, and that whatever are the defects of an English education the last thing it is likely to produce is a slave mentality. If they do not agree to this at least they hold that they have a right and a duty to stay on in Government schools till the Congress can offer them something better or as good.

In regard to non-violence, truth, and courage, Mr. Gandhi's teaching and example have had an excellent effect. But the central idea round which all other ideas are grouped in their minds is the idea of Swaraj, a self-governing and self-reliant India.

<sup>1</sup> I must admit I have since seen reason to believe that some teachers, some examiners and the overcrowding in schools have a great deal to answer for.

This idea has now become to them a religion, and it is associating itself with the old religion. The other evening at Bardoli I was watching the students playing cricket. Some time after dark I met the same boys coming back from the river. I wondered what they had been doing there so late. My missionary friend gave me the explanation. Hindu religion used to be a family affair. Each man worshipped by himself or with his family and relatives. But now the students have begun to perform their ceremonies in companies, ending up with the singing of some nationalist song. That means something, I think.

The students I met were very friendly and very good boys. I could not help envying their teachers, thinking that they have an easy task. The chief difficulty of a teacher, I suppose, is to find some worthy object to set before his pupils, something for which they will be zealous to work and to improve themselves. In India to-day the difficulty does not exist. The boys are only too eager to devote themselves to the service of India. It should be easy to show them that they must first work and make the most of themselves before they can be accounted worthy to undertake that service.

## XVII

### NON-CO-OPERATION AND THE SCHOOLS

GUJERAT, *June 14.*

I HAVE said that Mr. Gandhi's doctrines of national and individual self-reliance, courage, truthfulness, temperance, and non-violence have had an excellent effect on the older student who has just completed or is completing his studies in the Government-aided schools and colleges. But the tactics of Non-Co-operation in education are working against Mr. Gandhi's own teaching.

I hear complaints from parents and schoolmasters about the ruin of discipline in the schools. Boys of eighteen or twenty may be able to understand that Mr. Gandhi means to substitute self-control and self-respect in the place of respect for authority and control by authority. But small boys learn only the destructive half of the lesson.

A missionary met a little boy who had left the mission school and gone over to the Non-Co-operating "national" school across the way.

"What are they teaching you now?"

"Oh, they are teaching us to despise the Sircar."

"Anything else?"

"Oh, that is the chief thing. The rest of our course is the same as usual."

An Indian teacher complained that if a master keeps strict discipline his boys run away to the

“national” school. If a head master rebukes an assistant the man resigns, and is received with open arms by the Non-Co-operators. The Non-Co-operating schools for the same reason dare not maintain discipline.

Judging from what Non-Co-operators themselves have said to me, I doubt whether the work of education is taken very seriously in the majority of their “national” institutions. I asked a Non-Co-operating politician how the teaching in the “national” schools differed from that given in the Co-operating institutions. He admitted that the difference was small. “The fact is we haven’t yet been able to give much attention to this question. One thing at a time, you know. But the schools are very useful as centres of propaganda.”

Another Non-Co-operator (he was a member, if not the chairman, of a local committee for national education) answered the same question something as follows : “Well, in the higher classes we teach more through the vernacular and less through English.” (Quite a useful reform if it is really carried out.) “But most of our schools are elementary schools, and, after all, what can you teach there? Reading, writing, and arithmetic. There can’t be much difference in the way these are taught.”

Another Non-Co-operator mentioned the reduction of teachers’ salaries and the enlargement of classes among the municipal economies which he desired to see effected.

Other Non-Co-operators I have questioned agree that the teaching given in the “national” schools differs from that given in the Government schools only in the following points :

Boys are taught to sing patriotic songs. Boys spend two hours a day on spinning, weaving, or carding. In the higher forms teaching is given through the medium of the vernacular instead of through English as far as practicable.

But the "national" schools as a rule use the same text-books as are prescribed for the Government schools. It is admitted that for lack of funds their equipment is in other respects inferior to that provided in Government schools. The number of trained teachers is smaller and the pay of the teachers generally lower.

In spite of these admitted defects the policy of Non-Co-operation is not to set up "national" schools in villages in which there is no Co-operating school, but to open them in villages where there is already a Co-operating school. They use the name of India to persuade the boys to leave a good school and go to a bad one.

I was present at a sort of Non-Co-operating tea party, where they told me with some pride that they had forced the Government to close all the Co-operating schools in Bardoli. This did not agree with the information which I had from other and, as I thought, more trustworthy sources. I mentioned this to my friends, some of whom actually came from the Bardoli taluk. They then conferred together and admitted that they had over-stated their case. The Government had only closed about a dozen local board schools out of eighty. The other schools had only some fourteen or fifteen scholars apiece, but were kept open for the sake of making a show.

When I went to Bardoli I tried to verify this information. I visited the local board school in Bardoli

itself and another board school in a country village. I found about 300 boys at work. The teaching and discipline seemed pretty good, though the school attendance register showed that the Non-Co-operators are entitled to boast of having reduced the attendance by about 20 per cent. I noticed that many of the boys and some of the masters wore Gandhi caps in token of their adherence to Mr. Gandhi's Swadeshi doctrine. I thought this spoke well for their spirit and also for the common sense of the district authorities.

There were "national" schools, too, in both these villages. I missed seeing one of them, for school hours were over by the time I had finished with the board school. But I saw the "national" school at Bardoli at work—well, not exactly at work, but during working hours.

Coming into this school during working hours I found fifteen or twenty boys of all ages from six to twelve sitting about with their slates in front of them doing nothing in particular. There was a master sitting in the middle of the room. He, too, was doing nothing in particular. In the next room were a dozen spinning wheels standing idle.

The master explained that the two teachers attached to the vernacular school were both absent on leave. He was not the teacher of this part of the school, but of the English branch, which was closed for the holidays. He did not seem to feel any particular responsibility for or interest in the boys who were present and he did not claim that he had given them anything to do.

With some difficulty we persuaded him to set the boys to work at the spinning wheels, or, rather, at

one of them, for the others appeared to be out of order. We tested half a dozen boys, but none of them showed any sign of dexterity or practice, though they must have been attending the school nominally at least for months.

I can't imagine a more miserable spectacle than to see these fifteen boys kept idling in the name of patriotism within a hundred yards of a good school. And this in Bardoli, the headquarters of the taluk, on which Non-Co-operation has concentrated all its forces. It is this sort of thing that makes some of us a little doubtful about Swaraj.

I next asked a local official about the effect of Non-Co-operation on the attendance in the Co-operating schools. He had not got authoritative figures, but he told me that about 14 schools out of 80 had been closed or shifted to remoter villages. In the remaining schools the falling off in attendance now rarely exceeded 20 per cent., though it had been considerably greater at the height of the movement.

Most of the national schools were in a state of decline, but four or five of them were doing good work and might be expected to survive. I got the name of one of these schools and obtained permission to visit it.

I found one good class and a good teacher. But he was engaged in teaching English to boys of from twelve to fourteen, which was not exactly what I expected to find in a national school. However, when I asked him to take the boys in Indian history and geography he and his class did very well. The girls' school was creditable, but the lower vernacular boys' class did not look so good. The teachers had not much hold on their boys.

Inquiry showed that the upper English class, the good class, had been in existence before the advent of Non-Co-operation. It had been founded by a returned South African as a continuation class to supplement the local board school course. It was the inferior vernacular classes that had been called into being by the Non-Co-operation movement to kill the local board school.

At this school I asked whether the "untouchables" were admitted. I was told they were freely admitted. I asked whether any of them actually came. I was told that two boys were actually attending the school. I asked if I might see them. They happened to be absent that day.

My last view of the practical working of national education in the Surat district was gained a few hours before I left. I saw a national schoolmaster in his Gandhi cap marching a troop of some thirty small boys, all in Gandhi caps, through the streets of Surat. But something was wrong between the master and the boys, and as I watched I saw the master run at the big boy who led the procession and clout him over the head. The big boy appeared to be defiant, and I don't think the master succeeded in reducing him to submission. Anyhow he left him and ran back and started clouting the head of a small boy in the rear.

I couldn't remember seeing anything that looked so bad either at my own school or in India, and I said to myself "This is what comes of thinking that any untrained fellow is good enough to teach little boys their reading, writing, and arithmetic."

The other day I met an Indian college teacher, an intelligent man keen on his profession. He said :



"I am in full sympathy with the Non-Co-operation movement. But the leaders never took the precaution of consulting educationists about their education policy. It has been dictated by lawyers and politicians. They have done the country a great wrong."

I agree.

## XVIII

### MOHAMMEDAN VILLAGERS IN GUJERAT

GUJERAT, *June 22.*

**I**N Bombay the contact between educated India and the outside world is at its maximum. In Poona the intellectuals claim a traditional right to the political leadership of India. The ryots of Bardoli had undergone a special training in the principles and practice of Non-Co-operation.

Having visited these places I wanted next to see a specimen of the normal up-country Bombay district. Accordingly I accepted an invitation to stay with my Gujerati-knowing missionary friend at Broach. By his kindness I was able to have a talk with the ryots in two of the neighbouring villages, besides seeing something of the English-speaking professional men in the town.

The differences between the opinions held in Broach and those prevalent in Bombay and Bardoli is striking, and I think instructive, the more so as Broach is by no means a poor or inaccessible district. It lies on a main line of railway half-way between Mr. Gandhi's headquarters at Ahmedabad and the chief centre of Non-Co-operating activity, Bardoli. It is within five hours' journey of either place. If Mr. Gandhi's doctrines have not penetrated Broach it is difficult to believe that the country as a whole is ripe for civil disobedience or any other form of revolution, violent or non-violent.

Every Indian district has its own peculiarity, and the peculiarity of Broach is the presence of a considerable number of Mohammedan villages scattered over a Hindu countryside. The inhabitants of those villages are the descendants of Hindus converted long since to Mohammedanism. By what means the conversion was effected I do not know, but the descendants of the converts are now as zealous Mohammedans as can be found anywhere in the world.

Besides religious zeal there is a rough element in these villages. This blend of religion and ruffianism caused the district authorities some anxiety when the Khilafat agitation was at its height. In fact, troops were brought into the neighbourhood as a precautionary measure. My missionary host took me to visit one of these villages.

Here for the first time I came into an unfriendly atmosphere. The first two groups of ryots we fell in with showed a distressing anxiety to get rid of us in spite of my host's talent for general conversation. With the third group he was more successful, thanks to the fact that it contained a Mohammedan dairyman who spends part of his time in Bombay. This fact made him less suspicious or more conversational than his fellow-villagers. He invited us and his neighbours into his house, and tea was handed round. All signs of unfriendliness vanished rapidly. Indeed, the party was joined by the men who had at first repulsed us. They apologised for their show of hostility, and began to talk freely like the rest. They talked very freely.

"It is the Khilafat question, the religious question, that is troubling us. No use asking us to be loyal while we suspect you of being the enemies of our

religion. The Khalif must get back the guardianship of the Holy Places. England must take her troops out of Mesopotamia and leave Arabia alone. Then the Arabs and Turks will settle their quarrels between them. True, our pilgrims just now are often glad to see British troops near the Holy Places to protect them from the extortions of the Arab. But all the same it is an insult to our religion, and we would rather put up with a few years of extortion and robbery than submit to permanent degradation. Six months ago we were ready even to throw ourselves before the machine-guns if our leaders had given the word." (Curious how the same thing may appear differently, seen from a different point of view. A Hindu shopkeeper in a neighbouring village said, "Six months ago they were ready even to loot all our shops if their leaders had not held them back.")

"Our leaders then even persuaded us that the Hindus were our best friends. But now we are not so hot. We think that our leaders were too rash and that they nearly misled us. We respect Mr. Gandhi, but we think the rest of the Hindus only wanted to make a cat's-paw of us. There never can be unity between us and the Hindu idolaters. You are our natural friends. You worship the same God. No man can be a true Mohammedan if he does not revere Jesus, whom you revere. Only restore our Holy Places and we are your friends again."

"Swaraj? We do not want Swaraj. We will not have it. What would happen to us Mussulmans here under Swaraj? We are only one in ten."

We then said: "You know that it is commonly said that the English Government must rule India by making it its business to keep the Hindu and the

Mussulman apart. That is false. It is the business of the Sircar to do justice both to the Hindu and the Mussulman and to give contentment to both. You have told us what the Mussulman wants. What should the Sircar do for the Hindu ? ”

They answered : “ Well, there are the reforms. The Hindu wants more reforms. Let him have them. Such reforms as he is fit for. Not reforms for which he is not fit. And he is not fit for Swaraj. We tell you that.”

We next asked whether Indian officers might not be used more freely in the higher district posts. They said : Yes. Their own District Superintendent of Police was a Mohammedan, and they were well satisfied with the way he had dealt with them in troublous times. But they insisted that there must still be European supervision, and that it would be a great disaster if all the European district officers were withdrawn.

We asked whether, apart from the religious grievance, they were in other respects satisfied with their Government. They said : No. The Government had greatly deteriorated since the good old days of Queen Victoria, whom all Indian Mohammedans revere. Look at the way Indians are treated in South Africa. They should be treated as equals, as Queen Victoria promised. At least they should be treated as men, not as beasts.

As to the rise in prices, that was due to natural causes. They did not blame the Government for that. (Being cotton-growers, they have gained far more than they have lost from the rise in prices. Hence this unusually indulgent view.) But the rise in taxation they could not excuse.

I suggested that the rise in taxation was a necessary consequence of the rise in prices. But they knew more about the question than I had supposed.

"We admit that. Still the Government ought to be more economical before it raises fresh taxes. Look at the big salaries paid to Ministers and Executive Councillors. Look at the money spent on the Prince of Wales's tour and on the tours of Governors. Look at the money wasted on the new capital at Delhi." The ryot is always an economist!

Here, as in so many other places, the villagers had cause to regret Mr. Gandhi's meddling with education. There had once been a board school in the village. The Non-Co-operators set up a rival "national" school and supported it till it had succeeded in killing the board school. Then they let it die for lack of funds. To-day there is no school in the village.

I was interested by the reverence which these Mohammedans showed for the memory of Queen Victoria. I had come across the same thing a few days earlier, when I drew the attention of my Mohammedan bearer to the remarkable upward tendency of prices apparent in his bills. After a brief excursus on the extortionate nature of the local shopkeeper, he genuinely forgot all about the trifling inaccuracies in his accounts and poured out a flood of eloquence on the effect of the rise in prices upon the poor man. The recent fall in prices is as yet but faintly apparent in up-country Indian bazaars, and the preceding rise in prices still occupies the poor man's thoughts. That rise did not seem natural or pardonable to my bearer. His English was very limited, but his meaning was plain enough.

“ The poor man’s belly always burning, burning. Too much money getting. Bringing to shop. Not getting even one handful to eat. Always a burning in his belly. Big officers now not caring anything for the poor man, not fearing God, not caring for anything but drawing their pay. Not so in good Queen Victoria’s time. Queen Victoria making very nice bandobust. All so smooth. Big officers then caring like father for the poor man.”

Whatever may be the future of the British Raj, at least it is pretty certain that the Indian Moham-medan will always see the Golden Age not in the reign of Akbar but in the reign of Queen Victoria.

## XIX

### THE PROFESSIONAL MEN OF A COUNTRY TOWN

GUJERAT, *June 22.*

IN Bombay city it is difficult to persuade an educated Indian to take you seriously if you express a doubt of India's fitness for immediate Swaraj. He thinks you are merely using a polite euphemism to hint at your conviction that India is powerless to force England to concede Swaraj.

But in the country town of Broach the great majority of the professional men simply refuse to believe that any educated man, even among the Non-Co-operators, can think of Swaraj in the near future as a practical proposition. They do not stop to speculate whether the ryot could or could not be induced to tax himself adequately.

They say straight out : " There is no union among us yet. There are too many jealousies and suspicions between persons, castes, and religions, and the ' budmash ' (ruffianly) element in the country is still too strong. It would take advantage of our dissensions and gain the upper hand. Look at Malabar."

" Look at Ireland," one man added.

Even in Poona I found a good many professional men who thought like this. In Surat, the headquarters of the district to which Bardoli belongs, a majority of the professional men appeared to do so, though there was there a numerous and powerful clique



of Gandhian Non-Co-operators. But in Broach I could only find one educated man who professed to desire immediate Swaraj.

I confess this was a surprise to me. I had thought that during the last three years the great majority of the professional men had made an act of faith and had decided to face, at least in theory, the risks involved in Swaraj.

But Broach showed me that this is not so. If I had had any doubts about the candour of the Hindus they must have been dispelled by what I saw in the two educated Mohammedans with whom I spoke. One of them was an enthusiast for the unification of all religions, the other for an independent, self-reliant India. But the enthusiasm of each was pitifully lamed by his inveterate distrust of the Hindu.

All the same, Broach did little to reassure me as to the strength of the Sircar's position. The men were very lukewarm supporters of Government, and they will therefore be very lukewarm opponents of any revolutionary movement that may succeed Mr. Ghandi's. Pretty well all the men I met expressed the view that the reforms had not "changed the angle of vision," and that the district administration had long been deteriorating.

They were not anxious for constitutional changes ; their complaint was about the colour bar and the increasing lack of sympathy in the district officers. This complaint has nothing to do with the personality of the district officers at Broach. I hear the same at all up-country stations. I am glad to say it is rare to hear rudeness charged against district officers. Aloofness, or at worst superciliousness, is the usual ground for the indictment.

“To what do you attribute the alleged deterioration in the quality of the officers we send to India ? ” I often put this question to Indians who make the complaint.

The reply I get is : “ You do not now send men of good family, as you used to do.”

One gentleman put it somewhat vividly : “ You are sending us the sons of your sweepers and cobblers.” India is not yet quite converted to democracy !

Personally I don't believe that the officers in service to-day are either much better or much worse than their predecessors in point of birth, breeding, education, ability, character, sympathy, or anything else. But it is very easy to see how the Indian has come to think that there is less sympathy. Thirty years ago there were fewer educated Indians in a district, and the work of a district officer was for that reason simpler. In those days the district officer could make himself acquainted with every educated Indian in his district, besides keeping in touch with the leading ryots.

But now the number of educated men has increased manifold. The district work has consequently become more complex. It is no longer physically possible for a district officer to be personally acquainted with all who have an opinion to express on district affairs. Men who have something to say and have never had a chance of saying it naturally feel that the district officer is not taking pains to get the best advice.

Besides this, there is the fact that the Indian to-day quite rightly claims a social equality which his grandfather hardly desired. But the Englishman never is, never was, and never will be as ready as the

Frenchman to be hail-fellow-well-met with men of a foreign race. The net result is that our system of administration is growing and must continue to grow increasingly unpopular. I fear there is no way out so long as the system is ours.

And even in Broach Non-Co-operation has already established a footing. There is one well-known Non-Co-operator in the town. He is a rich and respected man. He was well known as a social reformer, a strong Nationalist, and something of a revolutionary, even before Mr. Gandhi's arrival. Among other good deeds of earlier days he gave £4,000 to found in the town an experimental high school free from Government control. His school has now been taken over by the Non-Co-operating movement.

## XX

### THE COUNTRY ROUND MR. GANDHI'S HOME

NEAR AHMEDABAD, *July 8.*

HAVING found the villagers round Broach so much less influenced by the Non-Co-operators than I had expected, I thought it would be interesting to see the country closer to Mr. Gandhi's headquarters at Ahmedabad. Accordingly I trespassed on the hospitality of a Swedish-American mission station in a little country town, a railway terminus within forty miles of Ahmedabad.

My hosts assured me that Non-Co-operation was a negligible factor in the neighbourhood. Under cross-examination they admitted that one Brahmin village had been converted to Gandhism during the last year. I questioned an Indian Christian pastor who tours in the country round about. He said that the Non-Co-operators had only gained a footing in two out of the twelve villages which he visits. I talked to a Hindu schoolmaster employed by the mission and found the usual nationalist sentiment with the usual doubts about the wisdom of attempting to do without European officers.

A visit to the town showed that the shopkeepers were Non-Co-operators in theory, but they admitted that in practice they had done less than nothing to carry out Mr. Gandhi's programme. There is a considerable Mohammedan population, but they had

never formed a Khilafat committee. There was no life even in the Khaddar movement.

I went to call on a big landowner. I was told that I should find at least lip loyalty. I did not. I found a man nursing an old grudge against the Government. Fifty years ago the Government resumed the twenty-two villages which this man's father held. Apparently this was done for the protection of the tenants. After an interval and in response to many petitions eleven out of the twenty-two villages were restored. Very likely the reasons for the restoration of the eleven villages were by no means so strong as those which led to the resumption of the twenty-two. Anyhow, the net result of the whole transaction is this. The Government have made an enemy of the family and given it back enough power to make it dangerous. The man expressed his feelings thus. "We are the beggars of Government. We dare not speak out our minds."

Recently the Government had, in his opinion, added insult to injury by offering him a commission as jamadar in the army. The rank of jamadar was not, he thought, high enough for a man who owns eleven villages. What made matters worse was that a higher rank had been offered to a neighbouring landholder no richer than himself. I wonder how the Swaraj army will be officered. But the fault is not all on one side. I heard the other day a story showing the sort of treatment a jamadar is expected to put up with. There is no need to repeat the story. There was nothing sensational about it. Still it helped me to understand that a gentleman of status might well hesitate to put himself in the position of a jamadar.

In the house of this landowner I met a retired

Government officer, an able and experienced man. His view was as follows :—" Educated India is now fit to rule all India, but the low franchise is a mistake. Give us a high franchise and we can rule India. We shall have to keep the European officers for a few years till we can train more men."

He emphasised the fact that nationalist feeling is, at least, as strong among Indian Government officers as among the non-officials. Yet he spoke highly of the work of the European officers, and confessed that having had experience of both he preferred to serve under the European. He did not speak to please.

Having finished with the town my host drove me out along a country road till we fell in with a stout-looking ryot. We had no difficulty in getting him to talk. There was something he wanted very much to say, and it came pouring out. While he was talking another ryot from a different village came up. He, too, was very full of the same grievance.

" Had they heard of Mr. Gandhi ? Of course they had. Ever since he started his movement they had been troubled with a plague of thieves and dacoits. They couldn't take their eyes off their sugar-cane but someone came and stole it out of their fields. At mid-day in their villages they were afraid of the dacoits. They owed no thanks to Mr. Gandhi. He had done them no good. He had only let loose the dacoits on the country."

" Why should you blame Mr. Gandhi for the dacoits ? " I asked.

" Why, we were never troubled with thieves like this till people began to come preaching about Mr. Gandhi and driving away the Sircar. But since

people began to talk in this way there is no end to the thieving. And the Sircar officials have grown slack. They do not exert themselves to catch the thieves as they did in Queen Victoria's time. They should catch them and hang them up, or let us have guns and we will shoot them."

We tried them about khaddar, the spinning-wheel, the Punjab, and the other favourite topics of the Non-Co-operators, but we could get no sign of interest from them. They were too angry about the thieves. They spoke even disrespectfully of Mr. Gandhi.

They were very angry, too, about the bribes exacted by petty Indian officials. We asked if any good would come of putting Indians as collectors and superintendents of police to supervise the petty officials. They had a decided opinion on the subject. "It would be very good for the Indian collector but very bad for us ryots." They wanted European officers, and they wanted them to be more vigorous.

Later we tried another village. It was one of the few in which the Non-Co-operator was said to have gained a footing, but we could find little trace of him. Here, too, the thieves had become a nuisance, and the point of view was the same as that of the ryots on the road. The complaint about bribery was even louder. There was not a spinning-wheel in the village nor in the country round. No attempt had been made to set up a national school.

I was a good deal surprised by all this. I had heard elsewhere about the increase in thieving and dacoity, and that the ryots held Mr. Gandhi responsible. But I had not paid much heed. I thought it was the sort of thing that the enemies of Non-Co-operation would like to believe. I doubted whether the ryot saw the

connection between Gandhism and the insecurity of property. But round Dholka they see it, or think they see it. I have to admit that.

Again the ryots say that official corruption has greatly increased. They don't know why, but they are sure it has. I wonder has it ? Or is it only that they have become less tolerant of the nuisance ? Perhaps the rise in prices has been too much for the morals of the petty official. Perhaps the high officials are kept so busy watching the latest Non-Co-operative stunt that they have no energy left for the thankless task of trailing the expert bribe-taker. Anyhow, the complaints are loud.

But what surprised me most was to find that the Non-Co-operators had got so little grip on the villages. I was puzzled, and did not at first see how to account for this. It is not that the ryots have not sufficient intelligence to be interested in politics ; the men we met had plenty of intelligence. It is not that they are contented ; they believe themselves to be worse off than their fathers were. It is not that they have any excessive affection for the Sircar ; they are quick to find fault with it.

I told an educated Indian that these ryots took no interest in Mr. Gandhi's teaching and asked him how he accounted for the fact. He suggested that the people were afraid to speak out. I don't believe it. The ryot is not such a coward as the educated Indian is apt to think him. The Bardoli ryot spoke out to the Mamlatdar's face. And if the Dholka ryot really was afraid to tell the truth to an American missionary and a touring newspaper correspondent, isn't that pretty good evidence that he had not been taught even the first essentials of Non-Co-operation—courage



and truthfulness ? Mr. Gandhi would admit as much, I think.

I have since visited another country tract, and I find things very much as they were at Dholka. The little country town, the centre of the tract, desires Swaraj, which is expected to keep money from going out of the country. But no serious effort seems to have been made to spread the idea in the surrounding villages. There we again get complaints of the recent increase in thieving. A group of professional tank diggers, low caste men who lead a wandering life, tell us that the British Raj has gone into hiding for the last two years. They think that it is high time that it should come out again. A village Brahmin takes the view that Swaraj with Indian officers is the best remedy for all the present discontents. An untouchable takes the opposite view very strongly, and his wife's opinion is still more decided. We remind them that Mr. Gandhi is championing the cause of the untouchable, and that the high-caste men tell us that they will revolutionise his status when they have got Swaraj. But these people are suspicious.

The Devil was sick—the Devil a monk would be ;  
The Devil was well—the Devil a monk was he,—

they think.

I am sure that the main cause of Non-Co-operation's failure in the villages is simply this. Mr. Gandhi has been very badly served by his followers. It is the old story. There has been a lack of organisation, a lack of sustained energy, a shortage of steady, conscientious workers. All the best village workers must have been sent to Bardoli. The men who came to Dholka didn't know their job or didn't do it.

Besides, Mr. Gandhi handicapped his movement by weighting it with all his pet ideas, good and bad. The ryot might have responded to the simple appeal of nationalism, but what could he do when the appeal came coupled with an order to embrace the untouchable and to spend his idle hours at the spinning wheel ? The boys who had been called out of the Government colleges were sent to him to convey the order. In accordance with the orthodox Non-Co-operative doctrine they began by assuring him that he had only six months' work in the year and that he sits idle for the other six months. Now it happens that the Gujarati ryot has thirteen months' work in the year—that is what he tells me—and his wife is busier than himself. So when a schoolboy came and talked like this—well, it sounded to him like silly nonsense. He turned a deaf ear and went off to his field to plough.

## XXI

### MR. GANDHI'S HEADQUARTERS

AHMEDABAD, *July 11.*

AHMEDABAD is the largest of the three great cities of Gujerat. Diversity is its chief characteristic. It was an old Mohammedan seat of Government. It is a modern industrial town, a great and growing city, containing some 250,000 inhabitants. There are many beautiful old mosques and eighty new cotton mills as ugly as anything industrialism has produced in any part of the world. East and West have met together, and the result is not all that could be desired, at least in regard to town sanitation. Overcrowding in the houses is, I am told, nearly as bad as in Bombay. It is in Ahmedabad that Mr. Gandhi has for many years made his home. Perhaps that helps to explain his deep distrust of Western civilisation. For he has always near him dreadful examples of the ill-effect of the importation of Western industrialism into India.

Leave the cotton mills and the wall and walk a little way in along the river bank and you will come to Mr. Gandhi's Ashram, or retreat. Here you are in a very different and a very much sweeter atmosphere.

The Ashram was apparently designed, or at least it must have served chiefly, to refresh Mr. Gandhi's soul when he grew weary of a world full of politics, journalism, and labour disputes. When I went there I was shown a school in which there is no punishment,

and a technical institute for training experts in hand spinning, but I do not think the place can be taken seriously either as a pioneer in national education or as a part of the organisation for the restoration of the spinning-wheel. Rather it is a place where spiritually minded patriots meet to discuss, compare, and find comfort in the different religions of the world. Christian missionaries are invited, and at Mr. Gandhi's request they sing him his favourite hymns, "When I survey the wondrous cross" and "We shall know each other better when the mists have rolled away." At other times the sweet sound of spinning-wheels about the place serves to assure the idealist that something practical is really being done to bring India back into the Golden Age.

I am sorry if I seem to write contemptuously. Even in Mr. Gandhi's absence a very wholesome atmosphere still hangs about the Ashram. Workers from all parts of India visit the place from time to time for the sake of their spiritual health. I can well believe that the atmosphere of the Ashram has done more than the wisdom of Government to save Indian Nationalism from the politics and religion of murder.

Fresh from the Ashram, I went to see some cotton mill owners. The Ahmedabad mills are Indian owned and for the most part Indian-managed. They have been making money—lots of money. The point of view of the average millowner can be put in a few words. He reverences Mr. Gandhi's person, but he doesn't like his views on capital and labour. Mr. Gandhi's followers have compelled him to pay very high wages, and he complains that high wages mean less work and worse work. He fears Mr. Gandhi's power too much to oppose him openly, or even to

refuse to subscribe to the Non-Co-operation movement. He suspects that Non-Co-operation's success would mean his ruin, but he subscribes all the same, hoping that the Government will be able to keep Non-Co-operation in check in spite of his subscription.

As to Swaraj, he has a clear idea of what he wants. He wants Government to leave him and his neighbours free to do and say what they like. Only it must also see that no one interferes with his interests. That is his idea of liberty and Swaraj. He does not think well of the present Government. He feels that it does not do all it might do for the rich man, and he argues that if the Government does not even take trouble to help the rich, much less is it likely to exert itself on behalf of the poor. The logic of this is plain to the old-school Oriental.

I saw also a few Ahmedabad shopkeepers. They were all for Swaraj. Their idea of Swaraj is much like that of the millowner. To them Swaraj means that India should be governed in accordance with their ideas, the European officers being retained to see that no trouble results from this reform.

In Ahmedabad, as in two other Gujerati towns, the Non-Co-operators gained control of the municipality, refused the Government grant for education, denied the right of the Government Educational Department to interfere in the municipal schools, and set about remodelling education on "national" lines. After much argument the Government used its legal power to suspend the municipalities and regain possession of the schools.

The Ahmedabad Non-Co-operators are entitled, I understand, to claim credit for one reform which they effected during their brief term of power. Having

refused the educational grant they found themselves in financial difficulties. They looked round for a new source of income, and discovered that the cotton mills had been for years successfully postponing an increase in their assessment commensurate with the increase in their profits. The Non-Co-operators promptly made them pay, not perhaps as much as they ought to pay, but at all events a great deal more than they had ever paid before. Mr. Gandhi's influence had a good deal to do with this, I suspect. He has little sympathy for the sorrows of the rich.

By the way, I heard a story here which interested me, as it seems to illustrate the rich man's idea of Swaraj and Mr. Gandhi's attitude towards rich men. I don't know whether the story is true or not, but it is not incredible. When the last income tax demand notices were issued some millowners were sanguine enough to run off to Mr. Gandhi and ask whether he would support them in a "No Income Tax" movement. Mr. Gandhi told them plainly to go to the deuce. He was not going to lend his name to enable rich men to evade making their contribution towards the expenses of the Government which protected them.

Here is another story, a true one, to illustrate the common Indian view of taxation problems. I was talking to a Gujerati, a professional man. He was inveighing against the folly of Government in levying direct taxation from one of the suspended municipalities instead of having recourse to octrois. I suggested that perhaps, after all, there was something in the idea that the octroi hits the poor man, while direct taxation only touches those who have, at least, some property or a fair income.

"Take the case of a municipal sweeper," I began.

"But they are not poor," said he. "I am a far poorer man than they. I have always earned Rs.400 a month, and I have always spent that amount to support myself and my family. Now that the rupee does not buy half what it used to buy I cannot make both ends meet. I can earn no more now than I could before prices rose. So I am a poor man. But look at the sweeper. He is getting Rs.14 a month where he used to get Rs.7. A sweeper can well support his family on Rs.14 a month. But that is not all. Not only does he earn Rs.14. His wife earns another Rs.14 and his children make Rs.20 more. I cannot send my wife to work, and my children have to go to school and are an expense to me. I am a poor man and the sweeper is a rich man. How is it fair that I should pay municipal taxes while the sweeper pays none?"

This gentleman is one of those who wish the foreign bureaucracy would learn to govern the country in accordance with Indian ideas. But the foreign bureaucrats never can be induced to see the force of arguments like this—except, indeed, when their own pockets are touched.

What about the true Gandhian Non-Co-operator? Is he in a majority in Ahmedabad? You will find him in Mr. Gandhi's Ashram. But outside the Ashram it is not easy to find Mr. Gandhi's true follower, not even in Ahmedabad. I did meet one outside the Ashram who professed to be an orthodox Gandhiite, but I doubted whether he understood the spirit of his master. Perhaps that was only because I suffered rather severely at his hands. This gentleman had spent more time in Europe than in Indian

villages. Incautiously I let out the fact that there are a number of people in England who mean well by India but honestly doubt whether India is ripe for immediate Swaraj. I asked whether there was anything such people could do to help. "Tell such well-intentioned persons to go home and learn not to be so patronising," was the answer.

What could I do after a snubbing like that? I could only wonder how I had ever allowed any such doubt to arise in my own mind. I tried hard to think how it had first arisen, and after a bit I remembered. Many years ago I was standing with an old Anglo-Indian on an Indian railway platform. We were watching the crowd at the booking office. Suddenly my senior said, "I'll believe these people are ready for Swaraj when they have learnt to buy railway tickets."

That remark made an impression on me at the time. So now after my snubbing I said to myself, "I wonder whether Swaraj is easier than buying railway tickets? Or perhaps the Indian has now learnt how to buy them. I'd better go and see."

So off I went to a little railway station close by. By good luck the booking office had just opened; the train was not due for another quarter of an hour; there were about forty people wanting tickets. The ticket office was on a common English model—a window in the wall with a railing outside to compel the ticket-buyers to form a queue. All would have gone smoothly but for one or two unfortunate facts. Fifteen persons in the crowd decided to approach the booking office from right to left; another fifteen opted for getting there from left to right. The remaining ten persons leant over the wooden rail and en-



deavoured by making a long arm to reach the booking office window, which had now become a storm centre. Whenever any person in the queues succeeded in getting a ticket he could only get out by ducking under the railing and between the legs of the long-armed people who were craning over to get at the window.

I went into one of the two queues and bought a ticket just to see what it felt like. One philanthropic gentleman, three places in front of me, when he got possession of the window, proceeded in the goodness of his heart to buy tickets for the more clamorous members of the public who had refused to take their place in the queue. The old lady immediately in front of me was not satisfied with the change she got. Whether her suspicions were well founded or not I cannot say, but when at last she was induced to scramble out she went away still clamorous and ill satisfied.

Soon after I had bought my ticket and crawled out under the rail I noticed that proceedings at the window were suspended, though the two queues were still scrummaging outside. Investigation showed that a gentleman of some status had come to buy a ticket. Of course he did not go near the window. He walked in at the office door and immediately secured the undivided attention of the booking-office clerk.

“Swaraj will be like that,” I thought.

## XXII

### AN INDEPENDENT

AHMEDABAD, *July 11.*

**M**R. GANDHI'S personality had a devastating effect in Indian political quarters. It extinguished all originality in the minor stars. Whoever wanted to shine must shine with reflected light. But outside politics his influence has been stimulating. In Gujerat one often came across traces of it in unexpected quarters, notably among the Christian missionaries. I came into contact with many of these missionaries, and I don't think that they would deny that Mr. Gandhi has read the Sermon on the Mount to some purpose or that his attempt to put its teaching into practice has stimulated them to try to get a little closer to the spirit of that document. If I am wrong in this I can't explain why the missionaries in Gujerat seemed to me so much better Christians than the average missionary I used to know ten years back.

Another example of Mr. Gandhi's influence in a different field is Miss Anasuyabai, the sister of a rich millowner in Ahmedabad. She is among the most devoted of Mr. Gandhi's disciples. Acting under Mr. Gandhi's inspiration, she has made herself the leader of Ahmedabad labour. She has succeeded in extorting from the millowners wages which are probably quite as high as is good for the present generation of mill hands. In one thing only she has failed.

She has not been able to teach the art of self-government to the labour unions. The success of these unions appears to depend entirely on her presence.

There is another remarkable personality in Ahmedabad whose growth was, I think, stimulated, though not directed, by Mr. Gandhi's influence. This man stands in a class by himself among the Ahmedabad millowners. His parents gave him a fair property and the ordinary rather narrow education which can be had in an Indian Mofussil town. But they gave him also brains and courage. With their help he has got riches, and, what is more remarkable, he has cultivated his mind. He is now one of the largest employers of labour in Ahmedabad. He admires Miss Anasuyabai's devotion to the cause of labour, and he is one of Mr. Gandhi's best friends. But he does not allow either Mr. Gandhi or the lady to dictate the policy he follows in dealing with his employees. On the other hand, he is not content with the short views taken by the local association of millowners, and he holds himself free to act independently. He has put much money into welfare work—efficiency work as he prefers to call it. Housing, schools, and hospitals have been provided for his mill hands. I saw some of the work. It was far ahead of any efforts in the same line that were shown to me in Bombay. An Indian doctor was in charge, and India deserves the credit for the work done. But trained Indian nurses are scarce, and I was not surprised to hear the Indian doctor asking for an English nurse. Left to himself, the Indian is ready enough to seek European assistance when it is really needed.

I went one morning to find out what this millowner thinks of things, and he was good enough to let me

keep him very late for breakfast. He does not count himself a politician. He wants to attend to his own business. But he has thought for himself on politics, and once or twice he has felt it to be his duty to step out and play his part in the hope of averting evils that were threatening his country.

He knows Mr. Gandhi intimately. He speaks frankly of him, and to him too, I believe. I was glad to get from him confirmation of my own view that Mr. Gandhi is not a clever tactician. In his view Mr. Gandhi is a great many other things which it is much better to be.

I do not think that this gentleman has ever thought out for himself an answer to the question "Is India ripe for complete and immediate Swaraj?" He might be inclined to take the risk in certain circumstances, but he would, I fancy, much prefer to make use of any assistance that Great Britain may be willing to give on terms consistent with India's self-respect. He is not a Non-Co-operator, and he did not approve of Mr. Gandhi's tactics. But he approved far less of the policy of the British Government. He would not allow you to call him a Moderate, hardly even a Co-operator. Yet he is one of the very few Indians who see that there is no sense in complaining of the repressive policy of the Indian Governments. He sees that Governments must govern. But he sees, too, the true objective, the enemy at which India must strike. That is the policy, or rather the spirit, that has produced the upheavals which have made repression necessary.

What is that spirit? His answer is definite enough. "It is the spirit that makes the British Parliament raise a hue and cry when it is rumoured that a con-

cession has been granted in Palestine to someone who is not a pure-bred Britisher. It is the spirit that makes members of the British Parliament not ashamed to demand that India should be compelled to spend in England the loans she raises in the open market. It is the spirit that makes Lancashire claim that Indian Customs duties should be regulated in her interest."

This man is no sentimentalist. He sees that England is in India for trade. He does not expect England to serve India for nothing. But he does expect England to take a long view and to see that she stands to gain more by trading with a free, prosperous, and friendly India than by endeavouring to retain her grip on a reluctant country which happens to have over three hundred million inhabitants.

I asked what action could England take to convince India that the spirit he hated was not, after all, the true spirit of the British people. Was he a believer in the round-table conference method? He said that after much consideration he had come to see the danger of this method. The decision arrived at by a round-table conference would not be likely to reflect the best thought in India. Informal private consultations would be likely to give better results.

"What would you suggest yourself?" I asked.

He put forward one or two ideas tentatively, and then suddenly he got, as it seemed to me, to the very root of the matter. "It is not what you give that counts. It is the spirit in which it is given. When the right spirit is there we shall know it, and that of itself will accomplish what could never be effected by any concession dishonestly or grudgingly made."

I think this Indian millowner is right. The key

to the Indian problem is not in India at all, but in England. The problem will be solved when the British people learn to regard India, not as a milch cow, nor even as an employee, but as a partner. India is not yet a strong partner. She is an invalid or, at best, a convalescent. She is poor and inexperienced. She still needs help. But common sense and common decency alike teach us that she cannot be expected to acquiesce any longer in the status of an inferior. With that lesson comes the other lesson that the individual Indian is not an inferior but an equal, stronger than us in some points and weaker than us in others, but, when all is said and done, a human being equal in status to ourselves. Till we learn these lessons the position in India is not going to improve. That is not sentiment. That is the hardest of hard facts.

## XXIII

### THE POLITICS OF GUJERAT

AHMEDABAD, *July 14.*

**I** MUST now try to give something like a connected survey of the politics of the people of Gujerat.

The English-educated class is unanimous in distrusting England's attitude towards India and in feeling that the idea of the white man as the dominant race still prevails not only in India and in the colonies but also in England. Still, the majority in this class are cautious men. They want to see us give the educated Indian more social consideration and more opportunities in the higher ranks of the Government services, but they doubt whether India is yet ripe for Swaraj. The fear of the Mohammedan and the fear of the criminal classes are still strong in their minds. They would be glad to go into the Councils to acquire experience in the art of self-government and to see what can be done there to improve the status of the Indian in India.

The very pick of the educated classes, the men with the most practical ability, the most courage and the most knowledge of the outside world, want to go much farther and faster than these moderates. I met such men not only in Ahmedabad but also in the adjacent native state of Baroda. They are as "extreme" as the Gandhiites, but more practical. They wish to use the Councils—vigorously.

The English-educated Gandhiites are nowhere in a majority, but in every town they are a powerful clique. In the first place, they are, most of them at least, sincere and energetic idealists. In the second place, they have acquired the exclusive right to use Mr. Gandhi's name, and Mr. Gandhi's name is still all-powerful in the towns and influential in the villages.

Coming to the vernacular speakers, we find that both in the big cities and in the small country towns the great mass of the townsfolk are theoretical Non-Co-operators. They have heard Mr. Gandhi's gospel preached and it attracts them. For its sake they are quite willing to abstain from exercising the privilege of recording a vote. They are prepared to go farther and wear a good deal of khaddar if it is cheap and not too uncomfortable. Besides this, they have persuaded themselves that Swaraj is a desirable thing, that it will mean more money and less taxes, and that the English power will still be somewhere not far off, ready to step in and straighten things out if unpleasant complications threaten.

Coming to the inhabitants of the villages, we may divide them roughly into three classes. First the landowners, small farmers or ryots, holding their land directly from the Government. Secondly, the landless men. In Gujerat most of these are the descendants of aboriginal jungle tribes. They now work as day labourers or farm servants. Thirdly, the untouchables. These men are in theory hereditary weavers, scavengers, etc. In practice they are often agricultural labourers, but they are none the less unclean in the eyes of the caste man. Though Mr. Gandhi has interested himself in their fate the untouchables still doubt whether there has been "any



real change in the angle of vision " of the high-caste Hindu. They look upon the British Raj as their best protector. The second class, the landless men, the aborigines, are a careless, thriftless, happy-go-lucky, hard-drinking people.<sup>1</sup> It would seem difficult to make any abiding impression on their unstable minds. Non-Co-operation has hardly attempted the task of getting a hold on these two classes. It is doubtful whether the idea of Swaraj would appeal to them even if it reached them.

With the ryot the case is different. Taking one thing with another, the Gujerat ryot is probably, on the balance, better off than his father was before him. Certainly, you will meet half a dozen substantial and intelligent ryots in almost any village. But these men have a number of grievances against their landlord, the sircar, and its agents, the petty officials, and it is true that the ryots ought to have more voice in the management of their own local affairs than has yet been given them. So when the Non-Co-operators take the pains to come to the villages and preach Swaraj, the ryots respond as they have done in Bardoli taluk. But there must be some fifty taluks in all in Gujerat, and, as far as I can ascertain, it is only in Bardoli and in two or three taluks of the Kaira district that the Non-Co-operators have actually carried their gospel to the villages. In other taluks a few intelligent village Brahmins have picked up the idea of Swaraj on their travels or from the vernacular newspapers. But the great mass of

<sup>1</sup> Since this was written there has been a curious "revivalist" movement among them. The goddess enters into or inspires individuals, and sets them to preach temperance, cleanliness, and vegetarianism. Their preaching has proved effective—for the time at least.

the ryots have not yet been converted. On the contrary, they wish to see more activity in putting down robbery and bribery, and they think European officers are the men for the work.

Yet little as Non-Co-operation has yet done to get hold of the ryot, experienced men all tell me that the Non-Co-operators will easily be able to control his vote at election time. They have enough workers to organise a week's propaganda at all polling centres, and there is no effective counter to the Nationalist appeal. In Madras and in Maharashtra the Brahmin-non-Brahmin controversy is likely to cost Nationalism many votes. But in Gujerat there is no such controversy, because there is no Brahmin ascendancy.

That is how things are. What will come out of it all? I ask Gandhiites whether they are prepared to accept Maharashtra's advice and go into the Councils. "Not at any price," they say. They produce a variety of reasons for refusing to do so, but the real reason is that they do not like to admit that Mr. Gandhi made a mistake. I then ask what other plan they have. They say they are going on with the constructive programme. I say: "Here is my difficulty. I have been trying to see this constructive work, but except for some activity in the khaddar movement I can see nothing. The national education movement is growing feebler. The temperance campaign has been dropped. Nothing is being done for the untouchables. I haven't been able to find a single panchayat court. Tell me where I can see any constructive work other than hand spinning." When I put this question to a Non-Co-operator the other day I received in answer an explanation intended to show why the khaddar

movement is less active than it was twelve months ago, a fact of which I had not hitherto been aware.

Apparently all the energy that is left in Gujerat Non-Co-operation is being put into the cult of the spinning-wheel. I think the present leaders regard this merely as a harmless means of keeping their followers marking time while they are busy waiting for something to turn up. But the followers, like Mr. Gandhi, are very much in earnest about the spinning-wheel. It is sad to see so much good energy wasted in a country where there is not too much energy to spare. Wasted, I'm afraid it will be. The other day a very sincere and intelligent Non-Co-operator told me that he had gone deeply into the question, and convinced himself that there is no economic future for the spinning-wheel, not even in the villages. The villagers themselves take the same view. On the whole, it looks as if the Gujerat Non-Co-operators will succeed in blocking Maharashtra's simple and practicable plan for using the Councils to aid the campaign for Swaraj. But they have no alternative plan to produce. They can only continue Non-Co-operation—that is doing nothing and endeavouring to prevent anyone else from doing anything.

Suppose the Non-Co-operators would condescend to move on, could Gujerat manage her own local affairs? If only her relations with the Central Government were satisfactorily adjusted I think she could. There are but few Mohammedans in Gujerat. The Mohammedan difficulty is therefore not serious. Then the British Raj has brought into existence what never was there before, a middle class, consisting of substantial ryots, merchants and professional men with two ideas firmly planted in their minds : first,

that the country should be governed in the interests of the people, not in the interests of the governors ; secondly, that it is the function of the law and the lawcourts to protect the individual against the abuse of executive authority. A middle class with these ideas will surely be able to govern its own country, not, perhaps, very perfectly, but after a fashion. I have already described the proceedings of a crowd at a railway station, and I mentioned that there was some confusion. But I omitted to state that they all caught their train.

I have also explained that the middle class in Gujerat are not very keen about taking over the management of their own affairs, and that the ryots are specially distrustful of the virtues of Indian collectors and superintendents of police. I mentioned these things not because I agree with the middle class or the ryots but because I must emphasise the difficulties that Indian Nationalism has to contend with. For myself, I am inclined to think that it might be better for all concerned to compel the middle class to take responsibility rather than to encourage it to continue grumbling about its guardian's mismanagement of the estate. As to the ryot's view regarding Indian officers, the fact is this : when you talk to the ryot about replacing European by Indian officers, he, of course, imagines that you mean promoting the petty officials who are worrying him, men whose morals have been ruined by the temptations and traditions of the subordinate services. But you can escape the bad effect of these temptations and traditions by recruiting direct for the higher posts. This has been done successfully on a small scale, and educated India has every right to claim that it should hereafter

be done on a large scale in spite of the ryot's suspicions.

It would not be just to override the suspicions of the untouchables so light-heartedly. It is a fact that they have a few very good friends among the caste Hindus. But these men would be the first to warn you that the caste Hindu ought to give the untouchable far more substantial guarantees for the future than any that have yet been offered.

## XXIV

### DELHI

DELHI, *July 17.*

TO Delhi from Ahmedabad is a whole day's railway journey through the territories of a few of the many ruling chiefs of Rajputana. I should have liked well to stop and visit some of these Native States, but life is short, and I had to be content with seeing what I could from the train.

What struck me most was that India is a very big place, with a very large and scattered population of country farmers, and that it would take a very big and a very thorough organisation to get into touch with any considerable percentage of those farmers. The journey was 500 miles long, more or less, through a barren land. Yet every here and there we came upon a village in the middle of a wilderness, and wherever the soil gave the least encouragement we saw the ryot busy with his plough.

From what I had learnt in the villages near Ahmedabad I felt pretty confident that the Non-Co-operators have not yet faced the gigantic task of making a Nationalist out of the ryot throughout the immense spaces of Rajputana. But there were small country towns dotted here and there along the railway, and I did not feel very certain about what had happened in them. So I was on the look-out for a chance of making inquiries. Seeing an old-school Anglo-

Indian on the station platform in one of these towns I got into conversation with him.

"Not much troubled with politics here?" I asked.

"That's just where you make the mistake," said he. "Why, this is the worst nest of sedition in the whole of India."

Six hours later I met this man's twin brother at another station, asked him the same question, and got the following reply:

"Well, we didn't hear much about politics five years ago, but now it is different. The richest man in the place, a decent fellow enough, has taken up with Gandhi and his notions, and now he spends his money in entertaining all the leading seditionists whom he can induce to come and stay with him. So the townspeople get plenty of free lectures."

From the above I think you may infer that the Nationalist spirit has penetrated into most of the country towns of Rajputana. Of course, you know that in the older Anglo-Indian dialect "sedition" is used as a synonym for "nationalism."

On this same journey I met two intelligent and experienced Europeans, men who have seen India from different points of view. I took opportunities to ask them separately whether they thought the general discontent and distrust of England went deep among the educated Indians.

To my surprise they both said "No." They supported their verdict by pointing out that Indians distrust each other more than they distrust us, as appears from their anxiety to invest their money in European-managed concerns and to get Europeans to decide contentious cases. They were able to cite instances out of their own experience.

"In general," they said, "Indians recognise that the foreign Raj is necessary for their comfort. They like their comfort, and they shrewdly suspect that Mr. Gandhi wants to make them very holy but supremely uncomfortable. They therefore find to their own surprise that they are not mortally offended with the Government for having rescued them against their will from the tyranny of so hard a taskmaster."

All this is true enough, and the men who used these arguments know the country better than I do. So when I heard their verdict I felt bound to review all my facts and opinions once again. At the same time I took into consideration the strong indictment which I heard a Parsee of ability urging against what he called "the pseudo-nationalism of India."

His point was that "in India the plea of Nationalism is put forward as an excuse for shirking the expense and self-sacrifice entailed in substituting an efficient modern social and administrative system for the cheap and nasty shoddy which India thinks good enough to go on with. She wants to get rid of her foreign governors because they insist on trying to make her take the arduous uphill path of improvement."

There is a great deal of truth in this indictment, though it is not consistent with the view taken by the two Europeans.

But after reviewing all my facts again, I find I cannot accept either the Parsee's indictment or the Europeans' verdict. I think these men are making the mistake of judging a country by what is worst and weakest in it. In the weak men the discontent and distrust is shallow enough. But when it comes to action it is the best, or at least the most vigorous,



men who count. And in the best and most vigorous men of this country the discontent and distrust goes very deep. I am sure of that.

When I got to Delhi I found that everyone who could leave the town had done so, or was preparing to do so. The modern Indian is as glad as the European to seek refuge from the hot weather in the hills. For example, in the first hill station I visited this year I found myself in a minority of three Europeans confronting a majority of twenty-two Indians and Parsees when I had occasion to go and dine at the most expensive hotel in the place. That was near Bombay. The number of educated Indians in the Himalayan hill stations must be enormous.

The fact is that the Indian suffers from the sun very nearly if not quite as much as the European. Some people think that explains the deficiency in energy which has ruined so many good causes in India. Certainly it explains why there is generally a lull in politics during the summer. Men who are worked up to the fighting pitch will break out even in the hot weather, but nobody is going to attend meetings merely for the sake of listening to speeches when the temperature is over 100 in the shade. The sun's heat may also be the reason why I got such pessimistic views of the world from the few men I succeeded in finding in Delhi.

These men were professional men, lawyers, teachers, and doctors. Their view is very similar to the Bombay view. They profess themselves distrustful of the British people and disgusted with the British Government. The Non-Co-operators recently got a large majority in the municipal council election, but there is even less constructive Non-Co-operation

visible than in Gujerat. In Gujerat khaddar really is freely though not universally worn by rich and poor alike. But if the people of Delhi possess khaddar garments they must be keeping them for state occasions. Most of the educated men seem to think that their countrymen ought to try the plan of going into the councils, but they are not enthusiastic about this or anything else.

Here, too, Mr. Gandhi seems to have tired his followers out, and they are now suffering from the reaction. The lawyers are curiously anxious to disclaim any interest in politics. It is easy to see that their sympathies are with Non-Co-operation, but Mr. Gandhi asked too much of them when he demanded that they should renounce their practice and trust to Congress finance to provide for the maintenance of their wives and the education of their children.

In the same way the students, I am told, are now fighting very shy of politics. They are Non-Co-operators at heart, but they know they cannot afford to give up their education and risk the ruin of their careers, as Mr. Gandhi wishes them to do.

I did not get a chance of talking to the uneducated townspeople here, but Indians tell me that they believed that Mr. Gandhi was going to bring Swaraj last year, and that they are now disillusioned and disheartened. The following conversation was overheard by an Indian and regarded by him as typical.

Not long ago a prominent Non-Co-operating leader came to Delhi. A trumpeter went round the town directing the shopkeepers to close their shops and go to the station to meet him. After the trumpeter had passed four cloth shopkeepers commented thus :

“ That is very nice for him. Congress pays him for blowing the trumpet. But where do we come in ? We suffer a double loss. They have forbidden us to sell foreign cloth, and now we are to close our shops.” None the less they obeyed. Out of patriotism or fear ? It is not easy to say.

An Indian Christian said to me, “ It is true that you can never hope to get any active co-operation from these people in the future. But, after all, you never had any active co-operation from them in the past. I don’t see why you shouldn’t carry on as before.” But in the past there was no active opposition. Now there is active opposition. I don’t believe it is possible for any Government to govern decently in the teeth of an active opposition unless there is active co-operation to help it.

Unlike the Gujaratis, people in Delhi admit that revolutions cannot be accomplished without violence. They see that extra-constitutional methods will lead to violence, authorised or unauthorised, sooner or later.

But the most striking difference between Delhi and Gujerat is this. In Gujerat the Mohammedans are a negligible minority. In Delhi they rival the Hindus in number and in status. Consequently, the existence of the Mohammedan difficulty is generally recognised and admitted.

Here is an extreme example which shows how deep is the cleavage between the two communities. I met a Mohammedan, a well-educated and courteous man but a strong Nationalist. His Nationalism led him to speak rather bluntly :

“ The gulf between us and the Hindus is still too wide. We cannot drive you out yet. You can still

divide and rule us. And it is lucky for us that you can. Because if we turn you out to-day we shall be at each other's throats to-morrow. But in forty years' time we shall learn to stand close enough together to drive you out. And then we shall have to fight it out between ourselves when we have got rid of you."

At this point his courtesy got the upper hand, and he asked pardon if anything he had said sounded offensive.

I did not mind his Nationalism. We have all had to get used to Nationalism's pleasant little ways. But I did not like his general view of human nature. It was clear that he regarded those miserable maxims "Divide and rule" and "Eat or be eaten" as the beginning, middle, and end of statesmanship, not only of British statesmanship but of all human statesmanship. On the whole I found the hot-weather atmosphere in Delhi unwholesome. Too much cynicism, too much discontent, and too little sign of the will to set things right.

## XXV

### MR. LLOYD GEORGE'S I.C.S. SPEECH

LAHORE, August 9.

**M**R. LLOYD GEORGE has certainly done his best to put fresh life into Indian politics. A long report of his speech in the Indian Civil Service debate has been cabled to this country and every Indian supporter of the British Raj feels that the ground has been cut away from under his feet.

That is perhaps an exaggeration. For besides millions living in remote villages who neither support nor oppose the Raj, but merely acquiesce in it, there are the battalions of the pessimists who believe that communal differences have crippled India and rendered her for ever incapable of self-government. These men have no right to quarrel with Mr. Lloyd George's speech, though they do not care to hear their private beliefs published abroad so boldly.

But these pessimists have little influence with their fellow-countrymen. Few of them are men with a wide outlook, and fewer still are men of vigour. All the other sections of Indian opinion, bitterly as they are opposed to each other in many matters, are united in the view they take of this speech. In Lahore the *Tribune* (Hindu independent) says that the speech takes the substance out of the declaration of 1917. Its sworn enemy the *Muslim*

*Outlook* (supporter of the Mohammedan Minister) writes of "an audacious and unblushing attack on the very root of the reforms." At the other end of India there is a strong protest in *Justice*, the organ of the Madras Non-Brahmin party, usually reckoned the staunchest supporter of the British Raj. The same protest is repeated in *New India* by Mrs. Annie Besant, who has now for two years been devoting her unageing energy to the twin tasks of warring against the Non-Brahmin party and making a success of the reforms. The *Bombay Times of India*, one of the very few Anglo-Indian papers which takes the trouble to understand the Indian point of view, is reduced to explaining away the speech by telling its readers that Mr. Lloyd George does not speak English like an educated man! As to the Non-Co-operating papers, with one voice they are asking the Moderates "Where is now your Magna Charta of 1917?"

I will try to show you what interpretation the Indian puts on Mr. Lloyd George's speech.

To begin with, Mr. Lloyd George speaks of the reforms as an "experiment," and he seems to suggest that that experiment may, if necessary, be scrapped. But the Indian wants to think of the reforms as a first step on the road to Dominion Home Rule—a step which cannot be revoked.

Next Mr. Lloyd George praises the moderation of the present Legislative Councils and suggests that a serious situation will arise if the next election brings in men anxious to use the Councils to force constitutional change. Now, the somewhat excessive moderation of the present Councils is due to the fact that the Indian National Congress ordered its adherents

to boycott the Council elections. This was a disastrous blow to the reforms scheme. It robbed the Councils of virile elements that might have been no less useful than troublesome. Still worse, it robbed the Councils of the right to be considered representative of the country. Every friend of the reforms sees that the reforms can never be successful unless the country as a whole, and not merely the Moderates, can be induced to send men to the Councils. It is certain that the country will never consent to do this unless it believes that the Councils can be used as engines for securing constitutional change. Indians understand Mr. Lloyd George to threaten that any attempt to use the Councils in this way will be regarded as a proof of the failure of the reforms "experiment."

Next, Mr. Lloyd George makes it plain that in his opinion India will never be able to walk on her own legs without "guidance" from Great Britain. "We have invited the co-operation of the people in India in the discharge of our trust" (i.e. the maintenance of good government in India), "but that is not in order to lead up to the final relinquishment of that trust but with a view to bringing them into partnership in the discharge of that trust." "I hope we shall transmit this trust to our descendants in generations to come." Indian Moderates had hitherto been looking forward to a day when Indians should be solely responsible for Indian affairs and partners in the affairs of the Empire. They were not inclined to allow that day to be postponed too long. Now they are told they must be content for ever with no more than a share in the control of Indian affairs.

Mr. Lloyd George goes on: "To discharge our

trust it is vital that we should have the continued assistance of British officials." "Whatever may be the success of Indians as Parliamentarians or administrators, I can see no period when they can dispense with the *guidance* and assistance of a small nucleus of British civil servants." "They only number 1,200 in a population of 315,000,000." "They are the steel frame of the whole structure." "There is no idea of winding up the Indian Civil Service. We consider it as essential to the very life of the system." "There is one institution we will not cripple. There is one institution we will not deprive of its functions and privileges, and that is the institution which built up the British Civil Service in India."

From all this Indians infer that the I.C.S., and the British element in it, is to be maintained more or less on its present footing and in its present numbers through all eternity. Now educated Indians feel that they will need plenty of European specialists for many years to come, though they want to be allowed to recruit these men themselves on their own terms in the open market. Many of them also feel that European Governors will be a convenience when communal disputes arise. But there are comparatively few who think it necessary to retain Europeans for the administrative work that is done by the Indian Civil Service. And far more important than the question whether Indian civil servants should be Europeans or Indians is the question of their status. Are they to continue as at present to be appointed and protected by the Secretary of State and kept in India to "guide" and control Indian Ministers and Indian Legislative Councils, or are they to be converted more or less gradually into servants of the



Indian public, recruited by Indian Governments on the clear understanding that it is only to those Governments that they must look for orders, for protection, and for reward ?

Mr. Lloyd George apparently pronounces for the first of these alternatives. If so, and if the pronouncement is allowed to stand, the Moderates will have to admit that the Non-Co-operators were right and that the reforms were mere camouflage. For Indian Ministers and Indian Legislative Councils can never acquire the reality of power so long as their nominal servants are appointed and protected by an outside authority which instructs them that it is their duty to "guide" their nominal masters.

## XXVI

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE PUNJAB

AMRITSAR, *July 28.*

I HAVE spent a few days in Lahore and Amritsar, and I had better give you my first impressions of the Punjab while they are fresh.

Naturally I had expected very soon to run up against the scars of 1919, and it was not long before I did so. But the very first thing that attracted my attention in the Punjab was the depth and width of the communal cleavages, far more serious here than anything I have come across in other parts of India. In the Punjab the Mohammedans are an absolute majority, about 55 per cent. of the total population. The Hindus come second and the Sikhs third. But the Mohammedans, though superior in number, are backward in education, and the Hindus have the lion's share of Government appointments. The policy of the Mohammedan educational Minister is directed towards readjusting the balance in accordance with the Mohammedan idea of equity, and this has led to war in the press and elsewhere. Again, Mohammedan feeling has been stirred by Hindu lecturers, who denounce the atrocities committed by the Moplahs in order to raise funds for the relief of their Hindu victims, and Mohammedans are asking Hindus to show more sympathy for the Moplahs'

wrongs. There is friction too, over the fate of the neighbouring North-West Frontier Province, which the Mohammedans are inclined to regard as a Mohammedan stronghold. Some even appear inclined to turn their eyes towards their co-religionists outside India. One Mohammedan said to me that the Punjab should be looked on as part of the Central Asian rather than as a part of the Indian problem.

The Hindus naturally look for support to the rest of India. The third community, the Sikhs, is traditionally hostile to the Mohammedan. It is mainly an agricultural community, and it is therefore less concerned than the Hindus and Mohammedans about the apportionment of Government posts. All the same, it has begun to claim a larger share and also larger representation on the local Legislative Council as against the other communities.

But just at present the energies of this community are concentrated on its feud with the Government. I shall not attempt to give you the history of this feud to-day, but this much has to be said at once. It is clearly in the interest of the Government to be friends with the Sikhs. It is equally clear that it is in the interest of the Sikhs to be friends with the Government. But to-day the breach between the two parties is wide and deep. The immediate cause of the trouble was the Akali movement, a puritanic religious revival among the Sikhs, chiefly directed against corrupt vested interests in the control of the endowments of their shrines or "Gurdwaras." Religious enthusiasts are never great sticklers for legality. Bureaucracies are not usually remarkable for their sympathy with the impatience of religious zealots. Hence many tears. After much had been

done and suffered the Government at last came forward with a bill which admittedly seemed calculated to enable the religious zealots to achieve their purposes promptly without breach of the law. But this was not done till the Sikh community had been thoroughly roused and filled with distrust of the Sircar and all its works and agents. The Non-Co-operators naturally took advantage of this state of affairs to shepherd the Sikhs into their fold, and it is clearly their interest to frustrate any effort to bring about a reconciliation between the Government and the Sikhs.

Now the Sikh community is a very peculiar one. It remembers the time, not a hundred years ago, when the Sikh army made and unmade rulers and was the only government in the Punjab. It has vigorous democratic and martial traditions, and these have religious sanction. For example, religion commands a Sikh to wear a *kirpan*—i.e. a dagger or sword—and the Government have had to concede this privilege.

This fierce democracy got thoroughly out of hand. The Punjab countryside has never been a remarkably law-abiding tract, and the rough element in the villages attached itself to the Akali movement as soon as it saw that the Sircar hesitated to interfere with anything calling itself an Akali. The Non-Co-operators were undoubtedly anxious to keep this rough element within bounds and to prevent it from disgracing the cause. They taught the Sikhs the tactics of non-violence, and succeeded in persuading them that, for the present at least, those tactics are expedient. But the Government and its officers may be pardoned if they think that this conversion is

only skin-deep. "I can say we have taught the Sikhs the political, if not the spiritual value of non-violence." That is what one prominent Non-Co-operator said to me.

And while the Non-Co-operators deprecated violence they attached great importance to displays of independence. The *kirpans* of the Sikhs grew longer, village panchayats arrogated to themselves the right of inflicting punishments, Government officers on tour were boycotted, bands of Akalis travelled on the railways without paying the fare, and in general the Sircar had to go into hiding. The extent to which lawlessness prevailed is disputed. It is contended that the Government were misled by exaggerated reports from Mohammedan police, traditionally hostile to the Sikhs. But there can be little doubt that the Government's power to maintain law and order was being rapidly undermined.

Anyhow, in March the Government judged it necessary to strike just when they were negotiating with the Sikhs about the details of the bill for the better management of Sikh *gurdwaras*. They arrested over a thousand Sikhs in different parts of the province. Most of these men are now in gaol. A large percentage of them are very rough diamonds, and many of the acts done by them can hardly be classed as political offences. For all that, most of the men were acting, and most of the acts were done, under the stimulus of the Akali movement.

To-day the Sikhs will not look at the Government's *gurdwara* bill till these prisoners are released, and the Government will not release the prisoners. Things are thus at a deadlock.

Suppose the Government put their pride in their

pocket, released the prisoners, and pressed on with the *gurdwara* bill, would the Sikhs be pacified? Some prominent Sikh leaders said "Yes," but I doubt it. These leaders struck me as tame men. I have seen also some of the rural minor leaders and some of the rank and file. They were not tame, and I think I know what would happen to leaders who tried to bring about a reconciliation. The *gurdwara* grievance was the immediate cause that brought the Sikhs into collision with the Government. But it is not the only cause, and there are other forces at work strong enough to prevent the Sikhs from accepting any peace-offering. That is the opinion of most of the Hindus and Mohammedans whom I questioned, and it appears to be the opinion of the Government.

For the Government are apparently determined to maintain law and order by imprisoning all those who endeavour to stir up the Sikhs, and by using their legal power to levy a punitive police tax on those villages which they hold responsible for the growth of lawlessness throughout the province. This punitive police tax is, of course, like revenge, a wild kind of justice. Regarded as a kind of policy, it again appears to be a wild variety. The task of determining how the tax should be apportioned among individuals is a delicate one. Sikhs tell me that in a certain village the rule followed was Rs.20 from each landholder, Rs.60 from each notorious criminal, and Rs.80 from each Akali or religious reformer. This may or may not be true. But it is what the Sikhs believe.

One result of this punitive police tax policy I saw when I went to call on a leading Hindu Non-Co-operator, a retired professor of chemistry. While I

was with him there walked in two fine Sikh farmers. They had come from a country village thirty miles away. The village had just been assessed to the punitive police tax, and they had been deputed to consult with the Hindu chemistry professor as to the action which they should take to meet the injustice of the Government.

Will the Government succeed in this effort to overawe the Sikh community and to make it feel that it is powerless to overthrow the Government, and that it is its interest to submit and make friends? A neutral Indian says: "Yes, if the Government stick to their policy and do not change it too soon for a policy of petting." It is true, I believe, that many weaklings among the Sikhs have gone over to the Government since they saw that it was prepared to hit out. All the same, I think it will be difficult to overawe the Sikh community into submission, and impossible to overawe it into friendship. That is, of course, only a first impression, but I have had two or three opportunities of seeing gatherings of Sikh villagers and talking to minor leaders. Among the men I met there was a remarkable number of returned soldiers and one survivor of the men who sailed for Canada in the *Komagata Maru*. It seemed to me that these men have been in contact with the outside world and that they have a real desire for freedom and the right to manage their own affairs. Certainly they have any amount of pride and obstinacy.

There is another thing we have to remember in estimating the probable results of the repressive policy upon the Sikhs. Governments can only act through their agents, and they rely on them for information. Once the Government is committed to a policy of

repression, the subordinate police becomes its eye and hand. There are many honourable exceptions, but, speaking generally, the subordinate police in India is unintelligent, incompetent, corrupt, and sometimes cruel. The result is that when the Government strikes it often strikes the wrong man. Instead of instilling awe it merely rouses anger and makes men feel that the fight for freedom is not an empty phrase.

Leaving the Sikhs and looking at the province as a whole, it is easily seen that Non-Co-operation scored a point last winter when it forced the Government's hand and induced it to take action against the passively resisting volunteer organisations, imprisoning some men and dispersing others with the help of police truncheons. Prison life in India is no joke, and it is easy to guess how much bitterness is in the minds of the men who were beaten or shut up for six months in gaol.

And in the background is the memory of 1919. The people here know what real injustice is. They have seen a deliberate effort to humiliate the Indian, to make their best men feel themselves inferior in status to the meanest white. The wounds have skinned over, but under the surface I doubt they have not healed.

The difficulty and danger of continuing the present system of government is terribly plain in the Punjab. There are too many people here who have seen the inside of a gaol. Unluckily, the difficulty and danger involved in changing that system is no less obvious. If I understand the Sikh aright, he will be as awkward a problem for Swaraj as for the British Raj, and the Hindu-Mohammedan quarrel is here, too, with the Afghan looking on from over the border.



I put this to a Co-operator who is also a strong nationalist, the best man, I think, that I have yet met in the Punjab. He answered : " What you say is true. But we must take the risk some day, and we are as ready for it now as we ever shall be. Our communal quarrels are not going to grow less under your administration. If we are responsible for the country we may be wise enough to recognise that we can't afford to carry our quarrels to extremes. Now that Non-Co-operation has suffered a defeat it is the time for you to act if you are wise. Give us four years in which to prepare ourselves for Dominion Home Rule, with a guarantee that we will get it at the end of that period. Do that, and there is a fair chance that we may make a success of Home Rule. But if you don't act now I don't think anything can save us from disaster."

That is the opinion of a man with a considerable stake in the country, a wealthy man with a large family, a lawyer with an independent and vigorous mind, but experienced and cautious.

## XXVII

### AMRITSAR

AMRITSAR, *July 28.*

I CAME to Amritsar just in time to see what we may hope to be the last scene in the tragedy of 1919. The play opened with the catastrophe, and now for three years the author has been bungling the job of getting his characters off the stage. Compensation was awarded to the sufferers long ago, but the scales sanctioned for Indians and Europeans were so ludicrously out of proportion that the matter had to be reconsidered, and, under pressure from the local Legislative Council, the Government have now made a liberal grant, about £150,000 in all. A great part of this goes to the relatives of those who were shot at Jallianwallah Bagh, and while I was in Amritsar I saw the money being paid out to these people by a board consisting of some Legislative councillors and the English Commissioner.

In any other country in the world there would surely have been some demonstration at this belated confession of error which has been wrung from a foreign Government. But though the distribution was made in public, and though some hundred sufferers, men and women, were collected to receive compensation, yet I could see no sign of any anti-

Government or anti-foreign demonstration in the couple of hours which I spent in watching the proceedings. By way of a further test I spent the next morning in walking about in the Amritsar bazaars. There are plenty of places in Amritsar where you would expect racial feeling to be pretty strong, and the morning after the Government had made a public confession of error was not exactly the time when the prestige of the casual European loafer would be at its highest. Yet I saw no trace of ill-will anywhere, and when I had occasion to ask my way, not always from the most promising-looking strangers, the information I needed was given civilly enough. A sturdy-looking fellow who showed me over Jallianwallah Bagh spoke with restraint, though there was a not unnatural bitterness underlying it.

Another day, at the railway station after dark, I saw a European lady with her little girl, aged four, standing about in the middle of an Indian crowd waiting for the train. She appeared to be quite at her ease, as if she knew that she was not likely to meet with any incivility.

What is the explanation of this absence of any visible sign of racial ill-will? Indian apathy, Indian courtesy, or Mr. Gandhi's teaching? A blend of all three, I think, since I must be quite truthful; but I should like to add that we could do with a great deal more of the second and third ingredients in the British Isles.

I have not forgotten what the mob at Amritsar did before it suffered. Looking round, one can see a fair sprinkling of rough customers. All the same, it must have taken quite a lot of preparation to work

them up to the pitch of doing what they did. I can't believe that one or two collisions with the military would have turned them into savages. There was more in it than that. But neither can I for a moment accept the theory that any considerable number of the educated class ever expected, or intended, or had any sympathy with such outbursts of savagery as occurred. The best neutral observers with whom I have spoken agree in saying that there was never any evidence or probability to support such theory.

In my walks through Amritsar I found the portraits of their Majesties the King and Queen still displayed in more than one little shop in the heart of the Indian bazaar. That brought to my mind one message which two or three Non-Co-operators and two or three Moderates have at different times and places asked me to give you. What they say is this :—" We personally are sincerely anxious for the maintenance of the connection between India and Great Britain. We think the connection is likely to serve the interests of humanity as well as of the two countries. But there has grown up a party in the Congress which believes in complete separation. It regards this as our true objective, not merely as a bargainer's demand. The majority among the educated class have not as yet made up their minds on this point. If you take advantage of the present lull to do something which will restore India's confidence in you, then the connection between the two countries may continue. But if you wait till the next storm gathers, then you may be sure that the extremists will be able to use that storm to commit the country definitely and finally to the

programme of separation, and your last chance will be lost."

I think there is a good deal in that. I doubt whether you will find any portraits of their Majesties exhibited in Amritsar after the next storm has done its work.

## XXVIII

### THE SIKHS

LAHORE, *August 8.*

**T**HE Sikh question is to-day the liveliest question in the Punjab. I have been talking to a Mohammedan who lives in the heart of the Sikh country. His business brings him in touch with the Sikh villagers over a considerable area. He speaks with a distinct pro-Government bias, but his abilities, knowledge, and honesty entitle his opinion to respect. Here it is: "The root of the Sikh difficulty is this: the Sikhs believe that the British Raj is weakening and that the time has come to attempt the restoration of the Sikh Raj. You have praised and petted the Sikhs too much and encouraged their martial spirit. They are overflowing with self-confidence. A great section of them really think that if they could only get rid of you they would be able to dominate the Mohammedans and Hindus in the Punjab. So, perhaps they could if it were only a question of the Punjab. They are a compact body, and they have a large nucleus of old soldiers and a martial tradition. There was a Sikh Raj in the Punjab less than a hundred years ago. You have forgotten that, but the Sikhs have not."

"You don't attach much importance to the Sikhs' religious grievance about the management of the *gurdwaras*?"

"There are many Sikhs who feel it acutely. But the majority regard it merely as a useful stimulus for wakening enthusiasm or as a battle-cry that will unite all Sikhs. Further, they see that whoever controls the management of the *gurdwaras* will control an annual income of something like £300,000, a serviceable asset for a political or military movement. A solution of the *gurdwara* problem may strengthen the Sikhs, but it won't placate them. Nor would the release of the Sikh prisoners do any good, if the Government were unwise enough to try it."

"You think the arrests made in March were necessary?"

"No doubt about it. Of course when you start arresting on that scale the police take the opportunity to sweep in a few wrong ones in their net. But the bulk of the men arrested had to be put away, if the Government were going to retain a footing in the country. The Akalis were going about in military formation, intimidating, abusing, and making life impossible for those who would not join their movement. At the same time dacoities and robberies were increasing. The criminals saw that the power of the police was broken, and that if they put on a black turban the Akalis would not be in a great hurry to believe anything against them. It was a bad time for the men who had anything to lose. All they could do was to become Akalis and hope that that would suffice to protect their property. Since the Government struck things have been much better. The men who are not Akalis no longer feel it necessary to profess to be what they are not."

"Even to-day I see a good sprinkling of black turbans about. Would it be true to say that the Akalis still dominate the majority of the Sikh villages or that all the young men are Akalis?"

"No, I wouldn't say that. You see, there have always been factions in most Sikh villages. If one faction takes up the Akali movement the other will generally be loyalist. In some villages the Akali faction is in the ascendant, but not in all. You see, the dream of the Sikh Raj not only ignores the fact that the British Raj is not going; it also ignores the fact that even if it did go the Mohammedan in the Punjab could call in help from outside, so that the Sikh would be cracked like a nut. Some of the Sikh villages see this. On the whole the factions are about equally balanced. Though the Akalis are the more energetic, the loyalists are more numerous. But if the Government show signs of weakening the Akalis will again carry all before them."

This man's view fits in pretty well with what I have been able to see for myself and with what I have heard from others. An American observer said to me: "The Government has bent itself double backwards trying to please the Sikhs. But it's all no use. The Sikh has his head swollen." Two Hindu lawyers denounced the concessions that the Government offered to the Sikhs in its latest *gurdwara* bill. They pointed out, quite fairly, I believe, that the bill proposed to make the Sikhs sole judges in cases where the legal rights of Hindus might be obnoxious to the Sikh community, and they contended that such a concession was neither just nor politic, but simply cowardly. Luckily, the Sikhs refused to look at the bill because the Government would not



release the prisoners, and it is never likely to be brought before the Council.

Two retired Sikh officers living in their villages corroborated the Mohammedan's account of the situation, and so did the inhabitants of a loyalist Sikh village which I saw by the kindness of a missionary who has spent forty years among the Sikhs. I should note that both the officers and the villagers spoke bitterly of certain cases in which the police had included the innocent with the guilty. At another place an Indian Christian who has been in close contact with the Sikhs gave it as his opinion that they were riding for a fall, and that nothing their friends could do would avail to save them.

By the kindness of a Hindu Non-Co-operator I was able to see a Sikh village in which the Akalis were entirely in the ascendant. I was very much impressed by what I saw and heard there. Young and old, all were interested in Sikh claims and grievances, and they knew a good deal about them. There were plenty of returned soldiers in the crowd that was talking with us. One of them had been a commissioned officer. He took a leading part in the conversation, as did also the old village headman. The Non-Co-operators had taught the villagers the doctrine of non-violence and of the abolition of separate communal representation, but I got the impression that their baptism in these doctrines is only skin-deep. They express themselves ready to give up their separate communal representation as soon as the Mohammedans do. But everyone knows that the Mohammedans will never consent to give up communal representation, so the offer is not so generous as it is intended to appear, and meanwhile

one of the chief charges of the Sikhs against the Government is that it was at first unwilling to give the Sikhs any communal representation at all, and that the representation which it has ultimately given them is inadequate, not, indeed, in relation to their numbers but in relation to their wealth and services. But if their belief in certain of the doctrines of Non-Co-operation struck me as superficial, I felt convinced that their impatience of the British Raj is deep-rooted. They showed no wish for a reconciliation and no anxiety for a solution of the *gurdwara* question, but instead a great readiness to rake up and make the most of other and smaller grievances. They showed, too, an extraordinary amount of self-confidence—rather more than it is safe for any human being to show, I thought.

I got the same impression from various Sikh extremists whom I met in gaols, newspaper offices, and such-like places. Remember, the Punjab countryside has benefited enormously by the great canal irrigation system which the British Raj has called into being. The Sikh landowner has grown prosperous. With prosperity has come a love of freedom, or at least a certain impatience of control. The Sikh resents interference from outside and is perfectly willing to take over the management of his own affairs. In point of fact, Sikh village panchayats have shown far more life than panchayats in other provinces. Unfortunately, a minority community living in the midst of two larger communities cannot very easily assume the management of its own affairs without incidentally taking charge of the affairs of its neighbours. The Sikh is perfectly willing to accept the responsibility, but "Sikh rule" is still, I am told,

the idiomatic phrase for an act of tyranny in the Punjab, and other communities are unwilling to accept the Sikh as their overlord. I am not surprised. Two unsophisticated Sikhs explained to me that the Sikhs consider that the Government should have given them "more than their share" in consideration of their military prowess.

## XXIX

### DIFFICULTIES IN THE PUNJAB

LYALLPUR, *August 25.*

THE other day an old school gaol superintendent told me that he was pained to recognise in his gaol the son of an old friend, a Sikh gentleman of good family and unquestioned loyalty. The struggle between the old and the new is sharper in the Punjab than in other parts of India. The upper classes in the towns are at least as well educated here as elsewhere, and they are perhaps more courageous. On the other hand, the village administration is old-fashioned and "paternal," judged even by Indian standards. The reason for this is plain enough. The country villages are rich, but the lawless element in the population is exceedingly vigorous. Among British officials some believe in the old methods, some in new. I have heard experienced Indian officers maintaining that nothing short of the old "paternal" methods will avail to keep the peace, and it is exceedingly hard to feel sure that these men are wrong. But the educated townsfolk naturally resent it when they see such methods applied with the sanction of European officers, and the younger men, at least in the Sikh villages, are beginning to show their feelings in this matter. To be frank, I have very little doubt but that educated Indians will themselves employ these

same methods and others more drastic if they come into power. That is why I think it just conceivable that educated India might make a better hand at running the Punjab than we seem likely to do.

For wherever you go you will find signs suggesting that the present administrative system is strained nearly to breaking point. Many, I think I may say most, of the European civil servants would quit if they could afford to do so. It is not any particular objection to the Montagu scheme or to the idea of working under an Indian Minister. If I understand them right, it is the feeling that it cannot be wise for any man to do his life's work in an atmosphere of hostility and misrepresentation when there is no prospect of the atmosphere improving. Next, you will find the subordinate Indian official complaining bitterly because the European civil servant does not support him in the measures he thinks necessary to maintain law and order. Then you have the educated Indian non-official, anxious, no doubt, to see law and order maintained, but standing ready to criticise fiercely any measures taken to that end. And, the instruments through which we have to work being what they are, our measures undeniably offer a fine target to the critic.

What I heard in and around the country town of Sialkot will illustrate this. In some earlier notes I mentioned that in February the Sikhs had half broken down the power of the Sircar in the villages, and that in March Government reasserted itself by arresting about a thousand men through the length and breadth of the province. In Sialkot serious mistakes were made. There seems to have been no very alarming disorder in the district, but some two

hundred men were arrested. Half of these were released without trial because the evidence did not disclose any substantial grounds for proceeding against them. The mistake is ascribed locally to the undue confidence placed by a European officer in an Indian policeman who had a unique reputation for honesty. Honest he certainly was, but, unluckily, he had old-fashioned ideas, and regarded his own private convictions as ample evidence on which to lock up any enemy of the Sircar.

I talked over the affair with two Jaildars. The Jaildar, by the way, is an old-fashioned instrument of Government whom I had not come across till I reached the Punjab. He has a rather nebulous kind of jurisdiction over a circle of thirty or forty villages. His real duty is by moral pressure to maintain the Government's authority in his circle. The Government select for the post a man of local influence, usually a biggish landowner, of good family and good character.

One of these Jaildars told me that in his circle there had been no disturbance worth mentioning. He had been able to keep the young men from listening to the agitators who came from outside. None the less, the police had seized a dozen men from his circle and some of them had got a year's imprisonment, though they had done nothing to deserve it. The other Jaildar also claimed that he had been able to keep his circle pretty quiet in the teeth of the efforts of the Akalis who were sent in from outside to make trouble. But the police had, with his consent, arrested half a dozen fellows who had begun to be mischievous. Some of these men had since been released, and the Government had granted them

permission to prosecute the police officer who had brought the charge against them. He had only known three honest policemen in his life, and this man was one of them. If the Government gave this treatment to the loyal and honest among their servants, what kind of service could they expect ?

A little later at another place I spoke with a recently retired Government officer, an Indian, superior in rank and education to the Jaildars, an able and unscrupulous man of the old school, very bitter against new ideas. He understood what he was talking about. He said : " Things are going from bad to worse. You must not believe what the Jaildars tell you about the order maintained in their circles. They are ashamed to confess it, but their power is going very fast. The young men don't heed them any more. They were nowhere in February. Haven't you heard how, at X station, the Akalis stopped two pensioned Indian Army officers who were wearing their medals and decorations and prevented them from going in to see the Prince of Wales ? X wasn't the only place where that happened. What do you expect ? You have taken away from your Tahsildars all the powers we used to use to twist the tails of the refractory. When I was a Tahsildar Mr. ——— would never trust me nor let me do what was necessary for the peace of the district. It's no good. You can't carry on the way you are going."

A few hours earlier I had heard the very officer he named vehemently denounced by a Non-Co-operator for ruthless and illegal repression. Here is one more example of the difficulty of government by consent in the Punjab. Some time ago I noticed that in

talking to me a prominent Non-Co-operator introduced variety into a long indictment of Government repression by accusing the Sircar of weakness and dereliction of duty because it had virtually handed over its functions to the Sikhs after the Nankhana Sahib tragedy, when a hundred Akalis were massacred by their enemy the Mahant who had possession of the shrine. All the Akalis of the province collected at the scene of the massacre, and for a few days the Government gave them their head and allowed them to take their own measures to obtain evidence against the guilty. An Indian eye-witness tells me that in those few days they succeeded in convincing the inhabitants of the place that the Sircar's old-fashioned methods are far preferable to a return of the Sikh Raj.



## XXX

### THE EXECUTIVE

LYALLPUR, *August 26.*

LET us look at the working of the Reforms in the Punjab. I will take first the Government and afterwards the Legislative Council.

The Executive, which governs subject to the control of the Legislative Council, consists of two Executive Councillors in charge of the reserved and two Ministers in charge of the transferred subjects. All four have seats in the Legislative Council. In theory the Executive Councillors are not responsible to the Legislative Council, while the Ministers are. Beside the Executive Councillors and the Ministers is the Governor, who does not sit in the Council. His task is to see that the Executive Councillors, the Ministers, and the Legislative Council are working harmoniously as far as may be.

At the present moment the Governor and one Executive Councillor are Indian civil servants, Europeans. The other Executive Councillor is a Sikh, non-official, a large landholder. One Minister is a Mohammedan barrister. The other is a Hindu, Lala Harkishen Lal, a man with a remarkable history. He first came into prominence as a financier who made much money by promoting indigenous industries and indigenous banking in the Punjab. Some of his

enterprises became involved in difficulties. Most Indians contend that these difficulties were due to the hostility of European interests and of the Punjab Government, but others put a different interpretation on the facts. In the martial law days he was arrested and got a life sentence, whether for waging war against the King or for conspiring to feed the hungry I cannot clearly recollect. At all events, all my informants are unanimous in saying that he had not even taken a very prominent part in opposing the Rowlatt Act. He was released after some months' imprisonment on the occasion of the passing of the Reforms Act. His name in the Punjab then stood very high. He had a great reputation for ability, and martial law had made a martyr of him. Had he chosen he could probably have outpaced Lajpat Rai in the race for the political leadership of the Punjab.

Instead, he preferred to accept a Ministership when it was offered to him. His friends explain that he did this because he believes in practical work rather than in ideals and agitations. I dare say that is true. He still keeps up his connection with Punjab industries and finance, and I have heard his administrative ability praised. But his action in joining hands with the Government cost him all his popularity and all his influence. Further, it is generally admitted that as a Parliamentarian he has not been a success. He has not been at pains to learn the arts of speaking and debating or to organise a body of supporters in the Council. Still less has he troubled to go outside the Council and seek to re-establish his old influence in the country. Some impute his failure to laziness and indifference.

His friends say that he is biding his time and waiting till people have grown tired of following idealists and extremists into the wilderness.

Meantime his colleague, the Mohammedan Minister, has shown no lack of aptitude for one side of Parliamentary work. He has not stumped the country, but he has, so it is said, called into existence a new Mohammedan daily paper to support his policy. In the Council he has organised the Mohammedans into a compact body, which votes solid as the Minister directs. As to his policy, Mohammedans say it is to secure the legitimate interests of the Mohammedans in the Punjab. But the Hindu view is that the Minister is using the Mohammedans' numerical superiority to fortify them in a privileged position. It is no secret that Lala Harkishen Lal disapproves of some of the more important actions of his Mohammedan colleague, and that the loyal followers of the Mohammedan Minister do not feel in any way bound to lend their support to Lala Harkishen Lal. But whatever may be the differences between the Ministers it is generally supposed that they feel that they have more in common with each other than either of them has with any European Civil servant.

Again, the Sikh Executive Councillor is popularly believed to be anxious to disclaim responsibility for the Government's dealings with the Sikhs. Certainly, he does not put himself forward, perhaps because he is by nature a cautious man and because he is painfully aware that, like Lala Harkishen Lal, he has lost whatever popular influence he may have possessed by associating himself with the Government.

Altogether it is pretty clear that the Punjab Executive does not work together as a Cabinet. The worst

of it is that the fault is not with the men, and only in part with the system. In part at least it seems to be the inevitable result of the communal cleavages in the Punjab.

There is another sign of weakness which strikes the outsider. That is the fact that the Government remains to-day as much as ever a "paper," or as we should say a "pen and ink" Raj, a bureaucracy which relies for information on the reports received from official subordinates, and endeavours to influence public opinion only through orders issued to their subordinates or through reasoned arguments communicated to the press. It cannot rely on the present Legislative Council or upon any party organisation for information as to the true state of feeling in the country. It hardly attempts to use the Legislative Council Chamber for the purpose of making its voice heard outside the walls of the building. Much less do the members of the Government go out into the country to explain their policy on public platforms, to seek to win personal influence over their hearers, and to use it to secure support. On the contrary, non-officials joining the Government are apparently content to shed their personal influence and never seek to grow new feathers. The state of Sikh feeling has all along been the gravest of the Government's anxieties. Yet I do not think either the Sikh Executive Councillor or any other member of the Government has ever addressed a public meeting of Sikhs. It is not because the Government have not the intelligence to see what is wanted. It is because their forces are not strong enough to give battle in the open.

## XXXI

### THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

LYALLPUR, *August 26.*

THE local Legislative Council is elected on a franchise which in effect excludes wage-earners while it includes the prosperous small farmer and the prosperous small shopkeeper. The Mohammedans and Sikhs vote in separate constituencies, and the so-called general constituencies are, in fact, to all intents and purposes communal Hindu constituencies.

The Mohammedans return 32 members to the Council, Hindus 20, and Sikhs 12. There are also 7 members elected by special interests and 22 members nominated by the Government, of whom 15 are officials.

The most obvious fact about the Council is that it is elected on a communal basis, that communal questions are always cropping up, and that it is in these questions that the Council displays most interest. This makes it very hard to believe that any Cabinet Minister whose community is not in a majority could maintain his position for six months once the Legislative Council has purged itself of the nominated element and become a purely representative body. But there is a permanent Mohammedan majority in the Punjab, and the community will insist on having a permanent Mohammedan majority in the

Council. So the Punjab is apparently condemned to be for ever under a pure Mohammedan Ministry. Which is absurd.

How to escape the absurdity? Someone says, "The trouble is this cursed system of communal representation. Abolish it." Easier said than done. I was talking on this subject to an advocate of very early Swaraj, a man of considerable ability and experience. He insisted that it was the duty of the British Government to abolish communal representation at all risks and at once, because if the British Government did not do it no Swaraj Government dare even attempt it.

The fact is, of course, that it is the separation of the communities and not the separate representation that works the mischief. "But the separation between the communities will tend to grow less distinct with the advance of education." Will it? Hindus have repeatedly assured me that it is the educated classes who are the most selfish champions of communal interests, and they produced evidence to support their assertion. Communal feeling appears to be as strong as ever in the rising generation. The other day a student told me that the voting to fill offices in college clubs all goes on a communal basis. He added, "And if a Mohammedan has a dispute with a Hindu another Mohammedan always feels bound to support his co-religionist, even if he believes him to be in the wrong." Think what the prohibition of intermarriage between the Mohammedan and the Hindu means. It means that no Mohammedan can have the most distant relative among the Hindus and that he knows that no descendant of his can ever be related to any Hindu. Thus not only is the cleavage

deep, it must constantly grow wider and wider as the two races are kept absolutely apart.

Seen from the Hindu side, the barrier does not look so alarming, because the Hindu is accustomed to the idea of separate castes that can never intermarry, and his tolerant religion has taught him to regulate his relations with such castes. But the Mohammedan does not find tolerance so natural, and, besides, the Hindu will hardly be able to repress his jealousy of a "caste" which is large enough to outweigh all the other castes put together and to upset the balance of power contemplated by the Hindu system.

There is no such impassable barrier between the Sikh and the Hindu. It is quite conceivable that the Sikhs may one day relapse into Hinduism if they should lose the martial pride that now binds them together. But the separation between the Mohammedans and Hindus is a real and permanent difficulty. It takes a sturdier faith than mine to believe that Swaraj will remove or mitigate it.

There is another and less perilous line of cleavage visible in the Legislative Council, the division between town and country interests. The distinction has been emphasised in the Punjab by the arrangement of the constituencies. Country towns were cut out of country districts and grouped for voting purposes with country towns in other parts of the province. The interests, or at least the views, of town and country are often diametrically opposed to each other as, for instance, in regard to the export of wheat, a subject which came up in the Council the other day. In a mixed constituency it is easy for the townsmen to apply pressure to the member and force him to

accept their view and ignore that of the less organised country folk. The latter have a right to claim a member who has not to serve two masters.

But on the top of this separation of the town from the country comes the residential qualification. This means in theory that the representatives of country constituencies must be villagers. But a villager, whether he be a big landholder or a small one, is not likely to be an experienced Parliamentarian. The interests of the country people would be far better looked after if they were allowed to return townsmen in whom they had confidence. Nearly everyone agrees that the present system has brought the standard of Parliamentary capacity in the Punjab Council to a very low level. I have only heard one defence of the residential qualification, and that was that the rule could be very easily evaded.

In theory the Minister is responsible to the Legislative Council, and can hold office only so long as he enjoys the confidence of the Council, while the Executive Councillor who administers the reserved subjects is independent of the Council. In practice the Council can when it chooses exert a very real influence on the administration of the reserved subjects. In fact, it is inclined to interfere in reserved subjects quite as much as in the transferred. Except in name there is little difference between the position of an Indian Minister and an Indian Executive Councillor. This is the more true because the Council is very apt to say "No" to its Minister on quite important points without expecting him to resign. Thus the other day Lala Harkishen Lal, the Hindu Minister, was refused leave to bring in a bill to control town



house rents. No resignation followed or was expected. The incident is typical of the looseness of the connection between the Minister and the Council.

There are still in the Council a few permanent officials, heads of departments subordinate to the Ministers or the Executive Councillors. Last week their presence led to a curious incident. There was a debate on a resolution urging the withdrawal of the embargo on the export of wheat. The Director of Agriculture, an English Civil servant, spoke in support of the resolution. While speaking he was interrupted more than once by his official superior, Lala Harkishen Lal, the Minister for Agriculture, who later rose and opposed the resolution. In doing so he criticised as inaccurate certain statistics which had been quoted by the Director of Agriculture. An Indian who was present, no friend of the Minister's, told me that though he had thought the interruptions a trifle undignified he could perceive nothing discourteous in the subsequent criticism. The Director of Agriculture, however, let it appear that he resented it, and at the close of the debate he voted for the resolution. A few days later he voted with the majority which refused leave to the Minister to introduce a bill to control town house rents. I have been told that this action was not opposed to the theory of the Constitution, which gives officials in the Councils considerable freedom in the use of their votes. But if this is the theory it had better not be translated into practice, for, rightly or wrongly, public opinion ascribes the vote to a personal feud and, what is worse, it sees a connection between this incident and Mr. Lloyd George's speech.

## XXXII

### MISCELLANEOUS PUNJABIS

RAWALPINDI, *August 28.*

**I**N wandering up and down the Punjab I have run across plenty of interesting people.

First there was that rare bird a Moham-medan who knows not only India and England but also one of the Mohammedan kingdoms of Asia. He has good grounds for his claim that he knows as much as any man about the politics of the Mohammedan world. His experience of Swaraj in an Asiatic country has made him a staunch Conservative. He thinks India needs the support of a strong hand, and he thinks the British hand as strong and patient as any that India is likely to find elsewhere. His estimate of the present situation is as follows :

“There is and can be no Hindu-Mohammedan unity. The Indian Mohammedan is very ready to be placated if Britain will go even a little way to make things easy for Turkey and to restore the prestige of the Khilafat. The Khilafat agitation in the Punjab was an affair of the towns. It made surprisingly little impression on the Mohammedan villages. In the towns 25 per cent. of the Moham-medans are Conservatives like myself ; 10 per cent. accept the Congress programme and want unqualified Swaraj ; the remaining 65 per cent. are Nationalists and desire Swaraj. But they will insist on com-

munal representation, and they want to leave power in the hands of the British Government to see that justice is done as between the different communities."

This estimate of the division of opinion among his co-religionists agrees pretty well with the estimates I get from European observers and with what I find in conversation with Mohammedans—except that most educated Mohammedans tell me that we shall have to clear out of Mesopotamia and Palestine if we are looking for a reconciliation with the Indian Mohammedan. Among both Mohammedans and Hindus I am constantly coming across the idea that you can have Swaraj and yet use the Britisher to secure you against the worst effects of religious quarrels. That looks to me rather like eating your cake and having it. I don't quite see how the thing is to be done. Some men point to the power of the Government of India. But the same men ask for changes in the constitution of that Government which would disable it from effectual intervention. Others put their trust in the continued presence of British district officers whom they, of course, subordinate to the Indian Ministry controlled by the locally-elected Indian Legislative Councils. But the reason why the British officer can now interfere with safety is not so much because he is British as because it is known that he derives his power from, and will be supported by an authority which is entirely independent of any Indian community.

How far the Mohammedan villager is from believing in Swaraj you can judge from the following. A Mohammedan Jaildar was denouncing to me the corruption and inefficiency of the Punjab police. I

said I had heard it suggested that the only way to mend matters was to appoint an Indian, a man of good character and good family, as superintendent of the police of the district. Such a man would know the ways of the people better and would be more accessible to complaints. The idea seemed to me well worth considering. What did he think of it? At first he seemed rather pleased with the suggestion. He saw himself as a possible superintendent of police, I think. Then he began to feel difficulties and shook his head: "No, that would not be good. Let the Englishman have an Indian adviser of equal status, but there must be an Englishman to give the order."

Even in the Punjab there is a certain percentage of thinking Hindus and Sikhs who are willing to stake all on the chance of their being able to live at amity with their Mohammedan neighbours whenever the British can be induced to withdraw. But more typical of the Punjab is the attitude of an old Hindu bookseller, a refined, religious, and well-read man. He inveighed against the martial law administration, the blind selfishness of the British people and the folly of the Anglo-Indian officials, with great vigour and bitterness. "But after all we must seek your friendship, and we have a right to do so. We are a civilised people like you. We are Aryans like you. And we are in a nasty fix. We can't trust our Mohammedan fellow-countrymen. The idea of Pan-Islam has got hold of them. If you will not stand by us there are bad days coming."

Perhaps the most influential person I have met in the Punjab was a lady who has been now for many years the head mistress of an Arya Samaj girls'

school. The Arya Samaj schools aim at fostering Nationalism. They are open to criticism from some points of view, but even their critics recognise that they are genuine educational institutions, very different from the political mushrooms which Non-Co-operation called into existence.

The head mistress herself was a politician, as shrewd and sane a politician as I have met in India, but a pretty strong Nationalist. She told me that since she had taken charge of the school she had seen to it that no girl left it without receiving a thorough grounding in Nationalism. She admitted that till 1919 most of the girls probably lost interest in politics after leaving school. But since 1919 that has changed, she thinks.

The Arya Samaj has girls' schools scattered all over the Punjab, and this school supplies the teachers. That will make a difference presently. But as yet there is not much sign of women's political activities. Indian newspapers are inclined to exaggerate the part which they play. The men are anxious to bring them into the field, and some day they will come, but to-day they are not there in any force. In Gujerat I met two lady politicians, but they were in politics because their fathers, husbands, or brothers were politicians. I believe it is quite true that all the women of India worship Mr. Gandhi, but they are interested in him as a saint, not as a politician. In Bardoli I did see one thing that impressed me. We had been sitting in a Brahmin's house hearing the villagers' views on Swaraj. I noticed a widow woman hanging about, evidently listening with all her ears. Before leaving I asked if we might have her views. She refused to talk, but she picked out

the man who had used the strongest language and said : " I agree with what *he* says."

But the women in Gujerat seemed to be much less ready to wear khaddar than the men. In the Punjab the women-folk of the educated classes are, I think, a bit ahead of their sisters in Gujerat. In one town I have seen them wearing khaddar, quite a number of them. In other places I have heard they make it very unpleasant for the wives of Indian officials when an active agitation is in progress. The European mistress of a Gujerat girls' school told me that there had been a lamentable change in the atmosphere of the school. Her pupils who used to be so friendly had now grown hostile or suspicious.

This much " progress " has been achieved, but apparently some years must elapse before Indian Nationalism can mobilise the full forces of the women, even in the towns.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Good information which I got later makes me think that I have here rather underestimated the interest which Indian women already take in politics, especially in the towns. The Sikh women are said to be in the van of progress in this direction. As elsewhere the women who are in politics are usually decidedly more bitter and uncompromising than the men.

### XXXIII

#### GURU KA BAGH

AMRITSAR, September 8.

FROM early times most of the Sikh shrines or *gurdwaras* appear to have been under the management of hereditary trustees known as Mahants. Sikhs allege that these men are, as a rule, men of ill life, that they misapply the income of the *gurdwaras* and tolerate idolatrous Hindu practices not consistent with the Sikh religion. The recent religious revival brought to life the sect of the Akalis who aim at purifying the *gurdwaras* by ejecting the Mahants or bringing them under the control of the newly-elected Siromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee.

Nearly the whole Sikh community sympathised with the Akalis in this. But the Mahants were in possession. Their exact legal position, rights, and responsibilities were exceedingly obscure. They could only be evicted through a suit in the courts, and the result of a suit in any given case would be exceedingly doubtful. The Akalis refused to waste energy in tedious litigation, and set about occupying the shrines. This led to the Nankhana Sahib massacre perpetrated by a Mahant who was unwilling to give up possession. It was plain that other breaches of the peace were likely to occur. The Government sought to pass legislation to enable the Akalis to

gain their ends legally, while the Akalis dropped their aggressive tactics for the time. But the Government's efforts to produce a bill satisfactory to the Sikhs had resulted in failure, and a party in the Gurdwara Committee had been pressing for a resumption of aggressive tactics when the trouble at Guru ka Bagh suddenly developed.

The Guru ka Bagh is a stretch of land some few hundreds of acres in extent attached to a small *gurdwara* ten miles from Amritsar. About a year ago the Akalis obtained possession of the *gurdwara* from the Mahant. But though he had to surrender the *gurdwara* he retained possession of the land, all or a part of which he claimed to be his own private property.

In August some Akalis entered on the land and cut down a tree for the use of the *gurdwara*. The Mahant lodged a complaint with the police. The men were arrested and put on trial. As Non-Co-operators they offered no defence, and were consequently convicted and sentenced. Thereafter the Akalis began to enter on the land in larger numbers and to cut more trees. The Mahant again complained, the police took up their position at the spot, and in the next few days had to arrest over a hundred men in the act of trespassing. The Siromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee now issued an appeal to the Akalis throughout the province to repair to Guru ka Bagh and assist in asserting their right to the land. The Government interfered to stop organised bodies of Akalis from moving on Amritsar. None the less something like a thousand Akalis succeeded in taking up their quarters in the *gurdwara* which adjoins the disputed land, and four or five thousand



more are said to be camped in the Golden Temple, Amritsar.

The struggle has now taken the following form. Every day a jatha of 100 Akali volunteers starts from the Golden Temple after taking a vow that they will use no violence, but will reach the Guru ka Bagh or return senseless. Another twenty-five men in the Guru ka Bagh Gurdwara take the same vow and set out to enter on the Bagh. These latter are dealt with by the police in the Bagh. Another body of police stops the Amritsar jatha at a bridge on the road seven miles from the city and disperses it as an unlawful assembly.

Yesterday I went to see that strange and most unedifying sight. It was, I think, the tenth day in succession on which a jatha had been dispersed. The business had become a matter of routine, and all the rules of the game were fixed and understood by the parties concerned. This is what it looks like, seen from the bridge where the police post is stationed :

A party of 100 Akalis appears marching up along the highroad wearing garlands and singing religious songs. There are three or four greybeards among them and many middle-aged men. Altogether a steady, respectable-looking crowd, though all but a very few would be poor men—small farmers, carpenters, returned soldiers, agricultural labourers, with an odd shopkeeper thrown in.

Two hundred yards to the rear of this jatha follows a crowd of spectators and sympathisers with a fleet of motors equipped as ambulances, manned by Sikh doctors and boy scouts. As the jatha approaches, a young English police officer calls out some eighteen

policemen from the post at the bridge and advances to meet it. His men are armed with the regulation police lathi—5½-foot brass-shod poles, quite capable of rendering a man worse than senseless if applied indiscreetly to the head.

Reaching the jatha he calls upon it to disperse. The jatha pays no heed. He orders his men to strike, and the long lathis rise and fall—once. Before they have time to strike a second blow the whole jatha is sitting on the ground. This is recognised as “safety,” and no blow is struck while the men remain seated. But the lathis have already had their effect. There are eight or ten men lying on the ground, if not senseless, at least unable to regain their feet (for the police have orders to strike at the legs), and that is recognised as a sufficient fulfilment of the vow. The stretchers are whistled up and the casualties removed. Then the remains of the jatha rises to its feet to resume its march, and the whole sickening round is gone through again and again until every soul in the jatha has been rendered incapable of further marching that day.<sup>1</sup>

A most brutal and futile business. I need hardly say that the young English police officer was not enjoying himself, nor were his men, though they are far from squeamish. Naturally there has been great complaint of police barbarity, but if you have to render one hundred men senseless daily and if the use of chloroform is barred, then I don't see how you

<sup>1</sup> The men were seldom if ever rendered insensible, but the beating was far from a joke and many men stood a lot of punishment before they would give in. One old greybeard I noticed getting up three times bleeding and limping pitifully before he would allow himself to be carried off.

can be much less brutal than the police were when I saw them. There have been surprisingly few broken bones. Two deaths have occurred, but they were the result not of dispersing the jatha but of an affray in a village in circumstances which are presumably going to be the subject of an inquiry.

Apart from the question of police methods, are the district authorities right in opposing the Akalis at all or in breaking up the jathas ?

The district authorities' case is very plain. "The Mahant is clearly in lawful possession of the land. We have no authority to inquire into his title or into the claims put forward in the name of the Sikh community. That is the function of the civil courts. Till someone produces a decree from the civil court authorising the ejection of the Mahant we have no choice but to protect him in his possession, by force if necessary. We have done what we could to induce him to make a settlement with the Akalis, but we cannot in decency threaten to refuse him protection." I cannot myself see how the district officers' case can be answered, but Indian opinion is absolutely unanimous in denouncing the action taken. Some contend that if the Government had only had the tact to make it plain to the Mahant that they were not going to support him, he would have compromised with the Akalis without any fuss. I dare say. Others suggest that it would be sufficient to stop the jatha by a cordon of police linked hand in hand. They argue that the Akalis would be precluded by their vow of non-violence from pushing through. I would be more impressed by this argument if the Akalis were anxious to avoid being beaten. But they have taken a vow to get there or be beaten

senseless, and they are not the people to submit to being defeated by so simple a device. They would no doubt hold that a steady push is not violence. In fact, another day I saw them pushing at Guru ka Bagh. In short, I fear it is useless to dream of perspiring but polite police spending their days and nights in courteously showing the Akalis off the premises. You have either to let the Akalis occupy the Bagh or accept the horrible alternative which they force upon you—beating them senseless.<sup>1</sup>

But though I don't see my way to blaming the district authorities, it has been brought home very clearly to me that this affair will rank as a first-class victory for Non-Co-operation. For it is rapidly depleting the small stock of goodwill and respect that remains to us in the Punjab. No people can be expected to acquiesce in seeing their fellow-countrymen beaten day after day by the agents of a foreign Administration. It is vain to ask them to realise that their countrymen are gratuitously bringing their sufferings upon their own heads. I have not met a single educated Indian who is prepared to admit that our action is even defensible. Moham-medans and Hindus are herein in full sympathy with the Sikhs. And then, any appeal to religion, however unreasonable, carries such terrible weight in this country, especially among the lower classes. The effect of the whole business there is, I fear, even

<sup>1</sup> Others said: "Why disperse or drive back these men with blows? Why not arrest and march them off to gaol?" This plan was adopted later but only after the Akalis had tired of the affair and begun to go back to their lands. If it had been tried at first I have no doubt the Punjab authorities would have found a thousand fresh prisoners on their hands daily, as it would have been far easier for the Sikhs to find men ready to go to gaol than to find men willing to be beaten senseless.

worse than among the educated. My bearer, a Mohammedan, is loyalist in his sympathies, and is not generally very apt to favour me with his views. But he came back from his first day in the Amritsar bazaar so full of horror at what he had heard that he could not refrain from pouring it all out before me and demanding an explanation. Nör, though I tried my best, could I even begin to get him to see that the police must protect a man in the possession of his land, even against another who claims it in the name of God.

As to the Sikhs themselves, you can guess what they think and say. They pride themselves on their tenacity and unyieldingness, and they are set on carrying the day. I wonder how it will end.<sup>1</sup> When I first came to the town educated men thought there must be a riot sooner or later. But the Sikh discipline and self-restraint is wonderful, and the fear of an outbreak seems to have passed off. They are certainly a remarkable community. Under what stimulus are they acting? Religion? I would hardly call it that. But in dealing with Indians it is often hard to distinguish between religion and communal loyalty, communal pride, and communal self-assertiveness.

How does it happen that you find yourself embroiled with the whole Punjab over a petty dispute which you are anxious to settle in favour of the popular party? Is it the fault of local officers who "have mishandled the situation"? I think not. The trouble is that in the Punjab at least you have lost the public confidence, and this incident is an example

<sup>1</sup> The Mahant eventually leased the land to a man who made it over to the Akalis.

of what happens when you try to govern without it. The Sikhs distrust you, and will not listen to the local officers when they advise them to be patient and to have recourse to the legal remedy which you are providing for their grievances. When the Sikhs refuse to be patient your officers enforce the law and ask the other communities to give them their moral support. But they remember that you have abused the law in your dealings with them, so they turn a ready ear to the outcry of the Sikhs and encourage them in their perversity. In short, in the Punjab you do not command enough of the public confidence to be in a position any longer to govern the people with their consent.

## XXXIV

### THE MOHAMMEDANS AND SIKHS OF THE PUNJAB

AMRITSAR, *September 11.*

I OUGHT to add my testimony to reinforce what has so often been said by men who are much better acquainted with the facts. Till you have spoken to a Mohammedan you can hardly realise how deeply and bitterly the Mohammedan resents the treatment which the Christian world has meted out to its Mohammedan neighbours. He reads the history of the Near East as the history of Christian aggression. The more readily to stir the feelings of his illiterate co-religionists, the educated Mohammedan finds it convenient to express his grievances in terms of religion. He brings in the Khilafat and the Holy Places. But his grievance is in fact political rather than religious. What excites him is the idea of the Christian Powers leagued against Mohammedan countries. He really believes that we differentiate in favour of Christian countries. I dare not say how often I have had to listen to this sort of thing : " All we ask is that you should treat Turkey no worse than you have treated Germany and Austria. If Hungary is to be independent, why should Mesopotamia be under a mandate ? "

Still the Mohammedans here seem to be in a more reasonable frame of mind than they were two years ago. They have begun to realise that the Turks

have no use for Arabia or Mesopotamia. They admit that Palestine is a difficulty, though they will stand up for the rights of their co-religionists there. I have met some who are prepared to acquiesce in the presence of British troops in Mesopotamia so long as they are quite sure that we are making no profit out of that country. They even view the prospect of the development of an irrigation system with equanimity. In time they may be reconciled to the idea of oil wells if it can be made quite clear that the Mohammedan world is really going to be enriched thereby.

But though some make these concessions all are agreed that the Turks must be put back into possession of Asia Minor and Thrace, and that our policy must be directed to supporting and strengthening their independence. They cannot bear to think of a world in which there is no strong and independent Mohammedan Power. These views are held by Mohammedan loyalists and conservatives at least as strongly as they are held by Mohammedan Nationalists. And they are held with emotion. Attempt to argue and the temperature at once rises to boiling point.

To pass on to the Sikhs. Their religion and history make them a very formidable community and they are in a very dangerous temper. The fact that the community has earned our gratitude and that it is in other ways deserving of respect and affection does not, I am afraid, render it the less dangerous to us or to its Hindu and Mohammedan neighbours.

The Sikh community numbers some three or four millions in all. It is of no importance outside the Punjab, where it is concentrated round Lahore and



Amritsar, with outlying colonies to the east and west. In the towns it has acquired considerable wealth through trade and industry. But its main strength lies in the villages. The Sikhs claim to own nearly one-third of the land in the Punjab, though they comprise only one-tenth of the population. They are a thrifty people, good farmers as well as good soldiers.

The lessons they have learnt in the army about the value of discipline they are applying in the management of their communal affairs. During the course of the *gurdwara* agitation they elected a committee, nominally for the management of the *gurdwaras*, but really for the government of the Sikh community. They have since brought into being something very like a militia and an admirable organisation through which the orders of the committee are communicated to every Sikh village. The orders thus communicated are promptly obeyed by a large section of the community. There are factions, but so long as the *gurdwara* question can be kept alive the pro-Government factions are likely to be negligible.

The educated Sikh leaders see that the idea of a Sikh Raj is an idle dream. Some want to get the best terms possible out of the Government. Others want to throw in their lot with the Non-Co-operators and get the best terms possible out of them. A few are only interested in the *gurdwara* question and would be placated if it could be settled in accordance with their wishes. But everyone who is in touch with the Sikh villagers tells me that the Sikh rank and file are thinking of the Sikh Raj. They are ready to fight for it, and they expect that their leaders will some day give the word. If their leaders hesitate

too long they are likely to oust them in favour of rasher men.

But for the present they acquiesce in the tactics of non-violence. It suits their ideas well. It seems to them like holding their fire till they get to close quarters. They delight in defying the authority of the Government and the police till the latter have to choose between increasing the population of the already overflowing gaols and dispersing parties of passively resisting Sikhs with kicks and blows.

The Sikhs show the utmost heroism and self-restraint in allowing the police to do their worst—till the day of vengeance comes. The Non-Co-operators tell me that the atmosphere thus produced is one of Christian forgiveness and brotherly love, but I think they must be mistaken. The other day I asked a Sikh landholder to take me to an Akali village, but he excused himself on the ground that the Akalis get very angry and curse him if they see him walking with an Englishman.

Non-Co-operators also tell me that they are teaching the Sikh to give up his communal separatism. A few perhaps of the educated Sikhs are genuinely willing to do so for the sake of the Nationalist ideal. But the net result of the Kirpan and Gurdwara agitation and of the formation of the Gurdwara Committee has been to intensify Sikh communal feeling to the highest degree. I cannot find any Sikh, Akali, or loyalist who is prepared to give the smallest consideration to the Hindu plea for a fair hearing in regard to their claim of right in the *gurdwaras*.

It seems to me that the Sikh agitation, with its intensified communalism, like the Khilafat agitation with its Pan-Islamic ideal, is an excellent stick in the

hand of the Non-Co-operator, who is merely anxious to beat the Government. But for the Nationalist who wants to establish Swaraj it is about as useful as half a ton of gelignite would be to a man who is setting out to build himself a house.

## XXXV

### THE PUNJAB SURVEYED

AMRITSAR, September 12.

I MUST now do my best to outline the situation in the Punjab as a whole.

The Sikhs, as I have explained before, are in a thoroughly dangerous temper both in the towns and in the villages. The other villagers pay little attention to politics, least of all the Mohammedans, who are numerous, ill-educated, and poor. Their villages have now become the best recruiting ground for the Indian army. But though the villagers are not politicians they can't be left out of account by the politicians who set about framing a new constitution for the Punjab. They have their own activities. A young Sikh landholder took me to see a village inhabited by a primitive Mohammedan tribe. They were a cautious people and we did not get much out of them, as they suspected me of being a Settlement officer come to raise their land tax. But they did make one illuminating remark: "If the Sikhs and the Sircar begin to fight, then will be the time for us to go out and loot." From all sides I hear that the *badmash* (ruffianly) element in the villages is still a powerful factor in the situation.

Here, as elsewhere, the town mob and the small shopkeepers are strongly anti-Government. These classes are exposed to the full blast of Nationalist

propaganda, and they are easily carried away by it. The argument from high prices appeals to them with overwhelming force.

The attitude of the educated Punjabi differs perceptibly from that of the educated Indian in Gujerat. I am not speaking of the political leaders, but of the professional men, whether they are Mohammedans, Hindus, or Sikhs. The extremists here readily admit that the policy of non-violence is only a matter of tactics and expediency, not of principle. They hold that for some years to come violence would be ruinous to the cause. But they hold, too, that violence will ultimately be necessary, and they are prepared to have recourse to it when opportunity arises—e.g. when the Indian army becomes infected with Nationalism.

On the other hand, they recognise the risks attending Swaraj more clearly than do their brothers in other provinces. The nearer you get to the North-west Frontier the clearer the recognition becomes. The presence of warlike and restless tribes and of a warlike and restless Mohammedan Power on the other side of a neighbouring frontier, the *badmash* element in the villages, and the communal differences throughout the province unite to warn them that self-government is not going to be an easy business. The result is that you find moderate doctrines accepted in Rawal Pindi by men who would, I am sure, be advanced Nationalists in any other part of India. Further, I hear Non-Co-operators making admissions about India's unfitness for complete and immediate Swaraj which would surprise me if they came from a Madras Moderate. Again, the local Non-Co-operators and Moderates are alike insistent on the need for

retaining a considerable English element in the services for some time to come, and they both seem to regard a permanent connection with the British Empire as desirable, if not essential, for external defence and as a precaution against internal strife.

It may puzzle you to understand how men who make these admissions can believe in Non-Co-operation. Yet the percentage of Co-operators is, I believe, smaller in the Punjab than in Gujerat. The explanation is that relations between the British official and the educated Indian are worse in the Punjab than in the rest of India. This is the result of the troubles of 1919 and of the cause that underlay those troubles : the presence of a highly-sensitive educated class in the midst of a simple-minded but spirited, not to say turbulent, population, simple-minded and educated alike being governed by a bureaucracy, one section of which holds that sedition in towns can and must be stamped out by methods which are appropriate in dealing with a village full of dacoits.

Of course, the deliberate policy of the Sikhs and the Non-Co-operators is to undermine the Government's authority by showing that it is afraid to enforce the law in the teeth of public opinion, whether that opinion is reasonable or not. Every allowance should be made for the difficulties of the officials who have to meet this policy. Especially ticklish is the task of dealing with the Sikhs, who, under the pretext of religion, carry defiance to its extreme limit and show very little respect for the rights of third parties.

But the Non-Co-operators and the Sikhs have two strings to their bow. If they gain something when the Government shirks a conflict, they gain far more when the Government accepts a challenge, if the

action which it takes can be made to appear cruel, excessive, unreasonable, or illegal. They therefore do their best to bring about ugly incidents, and I am afraid some of the officials, European and Indian, herein co-operate with the Non-Co-operators by allowing themselves to be drawn into rash or indefensible action. I have already said something about the mistakes alleged to have been committed in Sialkot. In Rawal Pindi Non-Co-operators supplied me with a very convincing indictment of the handling of the temperance campaign and of the riot which arose out of it. Inquiries in other quarters suggested that the indictment had substantial grounds to go on.

I will give part of the story told to me, as it illustrates the methods used on either side. The Non-Co-operators in Rawal Pindi began a vigorous temperance campaign. Now a temperance campaign presents the Government with an awkward dilemma. It must either sacrifice revenue which it can ill afford to lose, or it must appear as the champion of a traffic which is condemned by the Hindu and Mohammedan religions. Hence the enthusiasm of the Non-Co-operator for this cause. Well, after certain other steps had been taken, the Non-Co-operators began to send peaceful pickets to stand outside the public-houses and dissuade the drinkers from entering in. These men were arrested and sentenced not for picketing, which is no offence, but for being Congress Volunteers. This was an offence, but no Volunteers except pickets were then being arrested. Relays of Volunteers were immediately forthcoming to replace the arrested pickets. The authorities grew tired of sending the men to gaol, and the police, instead of arresting the pickets, began to beat them and drive

them away. So I was told by men whose word I felt bound to accept. This method of making a man move on may or may not be legal, but imagine its effect on the prestige of the British Raj! In the open daylight, in the open street, a constable is seen belabouring an unresisting victim, evidently a man of some status. On inquiry the passer-by learns that the man is being beaten for endeavouring to dissuade his fellows from the sin of drinking. Much the same thing happened at Lahore, only there the police had to deal with bodies of Volunteers who sat down when ordered to move on. The same tactics are being used against the Akalis, as I explained in a previous chapter. In this last case the law is clearly defied and the rights of the man in possession violated, so that the use of force appears to be necessary. But even if it is necessary in this case, and even if the old school is right in thinking that it is necessary in every case in which the authority of the Government is challenged, yet there can be no doubt about the reactions of old school methods. The men who have been beaten and imprisoned are certainly not going to co-operate, neither they nor their wives nor their families. Even when imprisonment is necessary, public sympathy is invariably on the side of the prisoners, and any tale of ill-treatment in gaol turns men's minds against co-operation with the bureaucracy.

I don't want to suggest that the British official in the Punjab does not know his job as well as his brothers in other provinces. My point is that his difficulties are far greater. The circumstances of the Punjab made it necessary for him to remain an autocrat long after autocracy was on the decline



in other provinces. The Punjab educated classes felt the bias towards autocracy and were not inclined to make allowance for circumstances. The events of 1919 were decisive. The average educated Punjabi to-day hates the sight of a British official, and is ready to give credence to the most ridiculous allegation to his discredit. I forbear from quoting the charges which I have heard made, charges which "we can't exactly prove." But they left on my mind the impression that it must be almost impossible for the wisest British official to make headway against the sea of hatred which 1919 set moving.<sup>1</sup>

Yet, as I have said, the Punjabi demands the continued presence of the British official more earnestly than his cousin in the south. But while he does so he is also more earnest in his demand for a change in the British official's attitude.

That change will not be easily made. The fact is that the British official is everywhere being asked to give up the two things which a man finds it hardest to part with—power and a privileged position. It is in the Punjab that the officials have enjoyed most power and most privilege. Small wonder if some of them fail to make the surrender with a good grace. A little Bengali doctor gave me the right word, I think: "More magnanimity is what we ask of them." If it were only a question of individuals they might get what they ask, but the Civil Service is apt to feel itself a corporation, and who ever heard of a corporation being magnanimous? I do not think

<sup>1</sup> I ought to say that personal friendships between British officials and educated Indians are common where the men are brought into contact with each other, but the two classes are inclined to stand aloof and eye each other with dislike and distrust.

that there is any use in hoping that things can be much better than they are under the existing system. Would any other system work better or, in other words, would provincial self-government be possible in the Punjab ? It would be absurd for me to venture an opinion on so difficult a question. I can only give you the views of others. Among the Indians who seemed to me best qualified to judge, Hindus, Mohammedans, and Sikhs, I found a general consensus of opinion to the following effect : " We cannot tolerate the continuance of the present system, with its thousands of political prisoners. Rather than do so we must take some risks. We could work provincial self-government safely enough if provision is made for British arbitration in the last resort for the settlement of communal disputes. We shall want British officers, but they must be subordinate to the local government. We can and will pay what is necessary to get the men we want."

That, so far as I could gather, is the trend of the best Indian opinion in the Punjab.

## XXXVI

### THE POSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

SIMLA, *September 22.*

WHAT interested me most at Simla was to find among the Indian members of the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State a few men who had learnt from contact with the work of administration that India's chief need is not an Assembly strong to criticise and check the Executive, but an Executive strong in the popular support, and therefore able to call upon the country to make sacrifices for posterity and to repress with vigour all disruptive forces, including communal feuds and communal pretensions inconsistent with the welfare of the country.

For convenience' sake I give the opinions of this school as though I had received them from one man at one time. In fact they reached me from different mouths at different times and places.

"Should we be cautious and advance slowly along the lines marked out in the Reforms Act, or should we press for immediate constitutional change? I have no doubt. When you are in an untenable position the only true caution is boldness. And the present position of the Government of India is untenable. There is a fatal flaw in the Reforms Act. The authors of the Act saw the need for a strong

central Government. They thought to secure a strong Government by making it independent of the Assembly and subordinate to the Secretary of State. The result is weakness. The Government of India has no popular support behind it. It has no party in the Legislative Assembly on which it can rely. It has to sweat blood for every vote it gets. A member of the Government rising to introduce a bill knows that he has to persuade every non-official member by sheer force of argument in opposition to the natural bias of the non-official mind against the official view. The physical, mental, and nervous strain on the members of the Government is immense, and they can never be sure in advance that they will be able to have their way. An organised Opposition could humiliate the Government every week, and an Opposition is being organised.

“The Government of India is conscious of the weakness of its position, and this consciousness is a fatal handicap when the need for action arises. The Government is nervous about levying fresh taxation to meet the deficit. It hesitates to deal vigorously with excesses of Communalism and with the mischief-makers who shelter themselves behind the name of Mr. Gandhi or of the Mohammedan religion. Further, it is beginning to be bullied by the Provincial Governments, which can claim to have more popular support and more local knowledge. Now the history of India shows that every stable Government in India has ultimately been ruined by the refusal of outlying provincial authorities to obey the central authority, and there is a danger that history may repeat itself if we allow the habit of challenging the central authority to become established.

“ The Government of India, as I have said, realises the weakness of its position, and it sees that strength can only come from popular support. It does its best to secure popular support by popular measures, but here it is hampered by the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State is an authority who knows nothing about India advised by men who know only what India once was. There is no one at the India Office who knows the India of to-day. In its ignorance of present-day Indian conditions the India Office fears that the Government of India has grown too amenable to popular pressure, and therefore scrutinises jealously, waters down, or rejects proposals designed by the Government of India to secure popular support.

“ So much for the position of the Government of India. Now look at the state of the country. You have felt what the atmosphere on the plains is like. If Mr. Gandhi's object was to create an atmosphere of distrust towards the Government, then we must admit he has been only too successful. To put it plainly, the Government has to do its work in a cloud of poison gas, suspicion, and misrepresentation. Any man who associates himself with the Government at once loses his influence. The man with a practical turn who is anxious to do practical work for the country finds himself crippled, if not absolutely powerless.

“ So I say the present position is untenable. We must make a change. Fortunately there is no need to act hurriedly if we begin to act at once. Our difficulty is with men's minds, and we can influence men's minds by letting them see that we are really preparing to make a real and satisfactory change.

But let us begin our preparations now, so that we may not later be compelled to hurry through our task. For the framing of a new Constitution for India is going to be no small or easy matter. It is not an operation at all comparable with framing a Constitution for a small, compact country like Ireland. All that has been said about the vastness of India and the differences in language, race, religion, community, and caste is true. In fact no task comparable to that of framing a Constitution for India has ever yet been undertaken. It is the fashion to laugh at the elaborate preparation made for the production of the Reforms Act. In my judgment the preparations made were inadequate.

“ But because it will be difficult to frame a Constitution for India that is no reason for shirking or postponing the task. I am not one of those who believe that self-government must be postponed till India is ripe for democracy. India is not ripe for real democracy to-day, I admit. But to expect a country to learn democracy first and self-government later is to put the cart before the horse. We have a very large educated class, as you will see if you look at the actual numbers without comparing them with the total population of India, and that educated class must carry on the government till the masses are ready to play their part. You know we have a sort of notion that England was not always a pure democracy.

“ This fact, that India is not ripe for full democracy, is one of the facts that the new Constitution will have to recognise. There are plenty of other awkward facts that the new Constitution will have to recognise and make provision for. It must recognise that

communities and minorities exist and must therefore be represented and safeguarded. It must recognise that there are disruptive forces against which India must be held together at all costs, and that the Central Government must therefore have power to make any province, any State, or any community jump to attention when it sees need to issue an order. In my judgment it must also protect the independence of the Civil Service, Indian or European, and shield it from excessive political influence.

"Then it will have to recognise the very awkward fact that the army cannot with safety be completely Indianised for the next thirty or forty years, and that if Britain is to continue responsible for the army she must be assured of funds sufficient for the discharge of her responsibility.

"Last, and most important, the new Constitution must recognise the necessity for securing that there shall always be adequate popular support behind the Government of the day. These are some of the points that the framers of the new Constitution will have to take into consideration. I would entrust the work to a commission consisting not only of Indians but of the best constitutional lawyers and statesmen I could get from any part of the world, and I would make them come to India and study conditions for two or three years before they set pen to paper. Our people would await the result patiently enough, you would find. We are not a young people. Our civilisation covers some thousand years. We have learnt not to be restive so long as we feel sure that we are in trustworthy hands. To-day the trouble is that we are not quite sure about that."

I own it did me good to find these men admitting that difficulties do exist, and that they must be faced, not ignored ; to see that they understand and feel humiliated by the weakness of the present position of the Government of India, and to hear them say bluntly that a National Government would stand much less nonsense than the Government of India is now compelled to put up with.

Sometimes, hearing Indian non-officials denouncing the sin of repression and magnifying the virtues of persuasion, soul force, and passive resistance, I am tempted to fancy that there really must be some twist in the Indian non-official mind that makes it incapable of facing unpleasant necessities. But the talk of these few legislators at Simla had a very wholesome effect in dispelling these fancies, and, after all, everyone in India knows plenty of Indian officials who make no bones about hitting quick and hitting hard as often as occasion arises.



## XXXVII

### THE EUROPEAN AND THE INDIAN VIEW CONTRASTED

SIMLA, *September 23.*

**S**IMLA is, of course, full of co-operating Indian politicians and European officials ; so it will be convenient now that I am here to contrast the opinions they hold on the subject of constitutional change. When I speak of the official view it must be understood that I am not speaking of the views of members of the Government of India, for they have a right to keep their opinions to themselves till the proper moment comes for unfolding them. I am speaking merely of the opinions commonly held by the rank and file of the European officials. Among these you will find a few reactionaries and a few revolutionaries, but the majority are men of a liberal though cautious turn of mind.

The view of this majority is, I think, something as follows :

“ The war certainly made some change necessary. Whether the Reforms Act started us along the best possible lines is very doubtful. But the Act is there, and we can't be always going back and making a fresh start. We must do our best to work it, and so must the country. It was very unfortunate that Mr. Gandhi took advantage of the post-war effervescence to divert the country's energies away from the task of working the new Constitution. But things look

like settling down a bit now. Unrest, like the poor, we shall always have with us, no doubt. Still, with firmness and patience we shall persuade the people to put their back into their task, and then they will discover how much power the reforms have placed within their reach. To make any further constitutional change just now would be unwise. In the first place, it would unsettle people's minds just as they are settling down, and it would encourage the notion that unconstitutional agitation is the right way to bring about constitutional change. Secondly, the Indian non-official has bitten off quite as much as he can chew. Neither the electorate nor the Councils nor the Ministers have yet learnt to make the best and fullest use of the powers they have, while the Indianisation of the services is progressing quite as fast as is consistent with the mere maintenance of law and order in the presence of communal difficulties, not to speak of the need for a reasonable standard of efficiency in the administration. On the whole, the Councils have made a very creditable start, but they still have plenty to learn. There is no sense in risking a breakdown by hurrying matters unduly."

If you press your man further and tease him into acting the devil's advocate, he will contend that "the Councils still exhibit an alarming anxiety to lavish money on wild-cat schemes for the development of 'national industries' and 'national resources,' and for the re-establishment of 'national culture' and 'national science.' At the same time, they are apt to regard as waste all expenditure on supervision, audit, and the maintenance of an efficient revenue-collecting staff. They are impatient of expenditure on agricultural research and on forest development,

and they expect quick returns where quick returns are, in the nature of things, impossible. They are prone to interfere in trifles, while they have not learnt to impose their will on the Minister in matters of large policy. The extreme sensitiveness of the Indian makes personal feuds dangerously important in politics and in the work of administration. Communal bitterness has been alarmingly apparent both in the Madras and in the Punjab Council. At Multan the other day the population indulged in a good old-time Hindu-Mohammedan riot. They celebrated the event by wiring to the Government for a European magistrate to try the cases and for a European doctor to give injury certificates. Surely this should warn us that the Indianisation of the services cannot be pushed much further just yet. If the Indian Minister and the Indian councillor know the country rather better than the average European official there is still the old danger that they may have too many friends with axes to grind, and too little energy and independence to stand up for an unpopular cause against the personal pressure put upon them by their relatives, friends, and castemen. Excessive haste will certainly lead to a very serious lowering of the standard of efficiency and integrity in the administration, which is already none too high. It may even lead to a loss of the power to maintain law and order. And then where shall we be? Once let the ball of internal strife be set rolling in India and it will take centuries to stop it."

There is some, even a great deal, of truth in all this. But, after all, in other countries, too, men and Ministers have their imperfections, and it is not easy

to produce evidence to show that Indian imperfections are so much more serious than those you find elsewhere. Now the Indian Moderates see Indian imperfections and admit the dangers that must attend any rapid advance towards Indian self-government. Nevertheless, they are now almost unanimous in demanding that a further advance should at once be made. The European official is apt to blame the Moderates for this and to say that they are weakly yielding to popular clamour and that they should learn to stand their ground and wait for the ebb of the tide. Herein I think the official is unjust to the Moderates. The Moderate contends that what he is asked to face is not a tide that ebbs and flows, but a rising flood that must find its way to the sea. "That flood we neither can nor will hold back. All we can do is to endeavour to divert and guide it down safe channels. The operation is not free from risks, but it is safer than a vain effort to confine the Ganges within a six-foot channel. The channel opened by the Reforms is plainly not wide enough to contain the coming waters. Widen it while yet there is time or the whole country will be submerged."

When one travels up and down the country listening to the talk of Indians, professional men, business men, officials, and students it is very difficult to believe that the current will ever set backward or to doubt that the Moderate is right in his estimate of the forces which are now loose in the land. A hundred different premises are stated, but the conclusion is always the same : " We can't trust foreigners to rule over us any longer." Once men have made up their minds about this they will pay little heed

to the best arguments to prove that foreign rule is wholesome or even necessary to their salvation.

The unanimity among educated men, excluding Mohammedans, is very striking. The non-Brahmins of Madras were once supposed to be the staunchest supporters of the British Raj. They have now broken the back of the Brahmin ascendancy and tasted power. Having done so, they see no reason for allowing the British ascendancy to survive. So I hear from the Madras men I meet here, Brahmins and non-Brahmins. Again, when I visited men who are described to me contemptuously in Hindustani as "Jo Hukms" ("Government men") I find that the description is often no longer correct. Many of these men have changed their views and blame the Government for lack of intelligence in failing to comply with popular demands. That shows which way they think the cat is going to jump, and some of them have spent their lives in studying the ways of the cat.

I hinted above that the educated Mohammedan is not at one with his fellow-countrymen on the subject of constitutional change. Whether one should regard it as a misfortune or the reverse, the fact remains that the Mohammedans are very half-hearted about Swaraj. If you had the Mohammedans on your side you might perhaps be able to carry on as the officials propose. But the Mohammedans are at present alienated, and if your policy in the Near East is not such as will effect a reconciliation with the Mohammedans while you refuse to do anything to placate the Hindus and the Sikhs, then I am inclined to agree with those Moderates who say that you are attempting the impossible in the name of caution.

In spite of the sharp difference between official and Indian opinion, a stay at Simla on the whole makes for optimism. Simla is not exactly a home of revolutionary thought, yet, for all they say, you may travel far before you find more common sense and goodwill concentrated in a single town. I know no place where relations between Europeans and Indians are easier. Indians speak warmly of the work and the courtesy of their European associates. Europeans, when they are not seduced into playing the devil's advocate, readily praise the good sense and good feeling of the Indian, and admit that his aspirations are only natural and proper, and that sooner or later they must be satisfied. Only both Indians and Europeans at Simla are tempted to assume that the man in the plains is as reasonable and as comfortable as they are. But he isn't. That's the trouble.

## XXXVIII

### THE ASSEMBLY AND THE RULING PRINCES

AGRA, *October 1.*

A MILD sensation was created at the end of September by the Viceroy's use of his extraordinary powers to override the action of the Legislative Assembly in refusing the Government permission to introduce a bill to restore to the rulers of Native States the protection they had enjoyed under the recently repealed Press Act.

I will not detain you with a criticism of the defects in the Assembly's rules of procedure, which are said by some to be mainly responsible for an unfortunate accident, nor will I attempt a summary of the controversy that is raging over the conduct of the Assembly and the Viceroy. I must leave unsung the very exhilarating passage of arms between the two senior civilians in the Council of State, and you must estimate for yourself the exact value of the Viceroy's action to the Non-Co-operator who is anxious to demonstrate to a schoolboy audience that half a loaf is not better than no bread or, in other words, that the reforms are valueless because some powers are still reserved to the Executive. The point to which I want to draw attention is this. The Assembly did a very bad day's work for the cause of Swaraj when it showed itself ready to slight the wishes of the ruling princes in a question affecting their dignity.

It is quite true that before the passing of the Press Act there was no law to safeguard the Native States from attacks in British Indian newspapers. There are probably many ruling princes living who remember paying blackmail to disreputable newspapers in those happy days, though they might hesitate to submit documentary evidence of the fact to the curious scrutiny of the Legislative Assembly or even of the Government of India's Secretariat. Such memories will hardly reconcile the princes to the idea of being again left exposed to newspaper attacks with no remedy but a suit for libel to be tried in British courts before a judge who is likely to show just about as much consideration for the dignity of a ruling prince as has been shown by the members of the Legislative Assembly. In fact it is difficult to imagine any action which the Assembly could have taken better calculated to deepen the distrust and hostility with which the princes regard the whole idea of representative government.

Now the princes have despotic authority over one-third of the extent and one-fifth of the population of British India. Many of them are men of considerable ability and great knowledge of the world. Some of them have great wealth, and some can reckon on the support of a considerable force of local patriotism. It is clearly a gross miscalculation to treat such a body of men as negligible. Yet this is the error of which the Legislative Assembly has been guilty. Some day, no doubt, under Swaraj the Legislative Assembly will have to fight a decisive battle with the ruling princes. Parliamentary rule and autocracy cannot coexist for long in India. But if the Legislative Assembly had not made the mistake of despising



as well as disliking the ruling princes it would have refrained from any ostentatious display of its hostility till it was surer of its own strength. The fact that the mistake is very commonly committed by educated Indians only makes matters worse. The princes see that the representative body will reflect and magnify the faults of its constituents.

One has not to be long in India to learn what the average educated Indian thinks of the Native States and their rulers. "The fact is, they are all rotten. When we come into power we will sweep them off the face of the earth." That is the pronouncement of an unsophisticated young Non-Co-operator. A moderate politician of some local repute says: "When we get Swaraj the first thing we will do is to tax them and make them pay their fair share of the cost of defending India." A Nationalist newspaper writes: "The fact is the administration in some Native States is about a hundred years behind the administration in British India." Well, the educated Indian has very good reason to dislike the Native States and their rulers. It is true that some able rulers have raised the standard of administration and of material comfort in their States, at least, to the level that prevails in British India. But they have been careful to keep their autocratic powers unimpaired, and their subjects enjoy only such liberties as are consistent with the interests of the ruling family. And even in these States too much depends on the personality of the ruler. A foolish son may undo the work of a wise father.

Further, all States are not fortunate in their rulers. Only the other day I was asking a liberal-minded and experienced missionary how far he thought India

could safely go in the direction of Swaraj. "Well, our experience of the administration in Native States is not encouraging," he replied. This answer would have exasperated the educated Indian, who cannot bear to hear the potentialities of British India judged by the achievement of Native States. He points out that we allow the ruling chief to misgovern his subjects with a minimum of interference, while we are prompt enough in interfering to crush any rising of the people against a chief who has forfeited their confidence. What he says is, I am afraid, true. Another missionary who knows well the small Native States in an out-of-the-way corner of India tells me that Curzon's policy of restricting interference has shaken the faith of the people in the British Raj, since they find the British Residents no longer free effectively to check scandalous acts of oppression. I am sorry I have not space for his story of the Tahsildar, the tailor, and the shirts that were too tight, nor for some other particulars which I once obtained from a young Hindu who held property and office under a Mohammedan dynasty. But I think you may take it that very curious things do still occur in the less enlightened States. And even in the most enlightened States there is often something not quite wholesome about the atmosphere of the palace or, at least, of the palace back stairs. Two or three British Indian Government servants who had done good service and received honours in the progressive Native States have told me that they would do their best to discourage their sons from following in their footsteps. "Too many temptations and too many intrigues," they said. "Service in British India, that is the service for a straightforward steady boy."

So much for the British Indian's view of the Native States. As to the ruling princes' view of the educated Indian of British India, it is some years since I heard a member of a prince's family explaining that the ruling princes would always feel difficulty in accepting a member of the lawyer class, or indeed any Indian, as a representative of his Majesty or as having any superior authority. In the last week I happened upon two British Indians of status newly returned from Native States, one in the north and one in the south. Both told me that the same feeling still persists as strongly as ever. "We don't approve of it, but that makes no difference. It is there," they said.

Well, that instinctive feeling could be got over, I think. But the ruling prince has more serious reason for disliking the idea of Swaraj. When a Legislative Assembly is the supreme authority in India will it allow ruling princes to crush agitations for constitutional changes in their States? Will it not rather encourage such agitations, if not by precept at least by its example? Will it not even permit British Indian territory to be used as a jumping-off ground for revolutionary enterprises? The ruling prince who asks himself these questions will be apt to come to the conclusion that his dynasty cannot afford to allow the establishment of Swaraj in India. The action of the Assembly is calculated to make even the most apathetic of the ruling princes ask himself this question. And if the ruling princes really exert themselves to bar the door against Swaraj, then Swaraj may have to wait.

## XXXIX

### THE INDIAN CHRISTIAN POINT OF VIEW

AGRA, *October 1.*

THE majority of the missionaries whom I meet in North India incline to the European officials' view that India has bitten off as much as she can chew, that the Indian says more than he feels and asks for more than he wants, that we should persevere with the Reform scheme, and refuse to be rushed into further concessions. But there is a strong minority which accepts the Indian Moderates' contention that something must be done to strike the popular imagination and to restore confidence in the honesty of our intentions. This was the view I got from one who has had exceptional opportunities of knowing the educated Hindu of North India, a missionary scholar whose name is known outside India, a senior man and, I should say, a cautious man. He did not believe in immediate Swaraj. He was not satisfied with what he had seen of Indian essays in self-government. But he thought some means must be found to give at least partial satisfaction to Indian desires. "The educated Indian is quivering all over with the strength of the Nationalist impulse. He has all but lost his self-control. What seems so significant to me is the change that has come over the Indian Christian community. Twenty years ago it was anti-Nationalist from top to toe.

To-day it is full of fiery young fellows more Nationalist than the most Nationalist of the Hindus. And it is the very best of our men to whom Nationalism appeals most. Look at Datta and Paul."

I have myself seen proof of this growth of the Nationalist spirit in the Indian Christian community of the North, but it is only among the educated men that the growth is noticeable, and even among them you generally find hesitations and reservations. The community is a small one. Most of its members are poor. As a whole, the community still looks with fear and distrust on its Hindu and Mohammedan neighbours, and it has some reason for doing so. A Christian student from a Mohammedan centre told me that his father had to seek police protection to save his house from being burnt down when the Khilafat agitation was at its height. In another town an educated Indian Christian with strong Nationalist leanings confessed to me that he and his fellows had had some very unpleasant experiences of the practical working of non-violent Non-Co-operation. The Hindus and Mohammedans will have to give more substantial proofs of a friendly or at least of a tolerant spirit before the Indian Christian community can risk putting itself behind the Nationalist demand. Even the Indian Christian Nationalists whom I have met showed a distinct lack of enthusiasm for the Indianisation of the services or for the transfer of further powers to the Legislative Councils. Their Nationalism took the form of the demand for a change of heart in the white man, equal treatment for European and Indian, and an increased share in the government of the Christian Churches in India.

There is plenty of feeling behind these demands.

European missionaries are having a difficult time with their flock. I hear the arrogance of the European missionary denounced in terms that used to be reserved for the Indian civil servant. Heaven send them Christian patience !

The Englishman at home has probably still before his eyes the old picture of the Indian Christian as a particularly unsatisfactory domestic servant, cringing and untruthful, or drunken and impertinent. You may rub that picture off the slate. North and South, the community is now producing educated men at least equal in intelligence and character to anything the rest of India can show. You find them holding offices of trust in the municipalities. You find them high up in Government service. You find them earning big incomes at the Bar. A year ago a leading Indian Christian barrister was appointed as a Judge of the High Court in Madras. The Missions have every right to feel proud of their offspring, even if the younger ones are showing themselves a little impatient of parental control.

I sometimes think that the safest guide in Indian politics is an Indian Christian with Nationalist sympathies who yet feels some responsibility for the interests of his own community. I should like to introduce you to such a one, ex-Principal Rudra, perhaps the most widely respected member of the Indian Christian community.

Mr. Rudra belongs to the older generation. He has relinquished the important educational position which he long held, and is now living in retirement. He was, I think, the first Indian to be appointed to the headship of a big Indian college. He was also the first, or almost the first, Indian Christian publicly to profess

his sympathy with Indian Nationalist aspirations. He was long the colleague of Mr. C. F. Andrews, and is still perhaps the closest of his friends. He is also numbered among the personal friends of Mr. Gandhi, and Mr. Gandhi, I notice, shows very good taste in his choice of personal friends. Friend of Mr. Gandhi and friend of Mr. C. F. Andrews though he is, Principal Rudra is yet more able and willing than any other Indian I know to appreciate and make allowances for the necessities of government and the difficulties of foreign officials. He is, in fact, what it behoves the principal of a great educational institution to be, a cautious man with a strong sense of the need for discipline and the value of it.

The Non-Co-operation movement he views with a mixture of admiration and anxiety. He sees "moral grandeur" in Mr. Gandhi's ideas, but that does not blind him to the dangers inseparable from Mr. Gandhi's plan of action. Mr. Gandhi's decision to extend Non-Co-operation to the schools and colleges affected him as a personal sorrow. He told his students that they were bound to follow the dictates of their own conscience in this matter, warning them at the same time that they would not be doing their duty by their country if they made their decision lightly, without weighing well all the arguments, pro and con, which he put before them. The upshot was that he lost very few students, and those who did go went with a full sense of the seriousness of the decision they had taken.

As I have said, Principal Rudra struck me as a cautious man, a man averse to unnecessary changes and experiments. Yet he had made up his mind that "the reforms are not enough. The Punjab

follies cancelled their effect. You have lost the confidence of India. Something striking must be done at once to dispel the mistrust of you that clouds the mind of the rising generation."

He resented bitterly Mr. Lloyd George's suggestion that India could never learn to stand upright without the support of a foreign steel frame. He was also anxious that you should give up thinking and speaking of the Non-Co-operators as mad dogs whom no wise man would seek to placate. "Begin instead to regard them as sometimes intelligent and often patriotic human beings with whom you will one day have to come to terms."

But the deepest impressions I got from my conversation with Principal Rudra were first of the strength of the sentimental attachment which bound the elder generation to you, and secondly of the change in the sentiments of the rising generation. "Some of the younger men do not even like to see an Englishman," said Principal Rudra. That is the polite Indian euphemism for "They cannot bear the sight of an Englishman." "It hurts me to feel that," Principal Rudra went on, "when I remember the immense reverence we used to have for Englishmen when we were boys. It hurts Mahatma Gandhi, too. The Englishman has no better friend and no greater admirer than he. But even he cannot check the change in the minds of the generation that is growing up. I think it is still possible to win the young men back and to re-establish the old faith in English justice and English mercy. But the sands are running out fast. If you harden your hearts now, then our old comradeship must dissolve, perhaps in bloodshed and anarchy."



I was talking the other day to an eminent Hindu politician of the older generation, a man who is even to-day often classed as an extremist. An extremist he is, judged by his impatience to see Indian Nationalist aspirations satisfied. But I am told he has lost influence because he is suspected of being too friendly to you, too anxious to assist in a reconciliation between India and Great Britain. I am not surprised, for I got from him, as from Principal Rudra, the impression of a strong sentimental attachment to the British name, and an uneasy consciousness of a change in the sentiments of the younger generation. The change is there right enough for anyone with eyes to see, and it makes me wonder sometimes whether you would not be prudent to make the final settlement of the Indian question while you have still friends left in the country.

Here are two specimens of the younger generation. First a Hindu student meeting me at a bank (it takes half an hour to get a cheque cashed in India, and you are apt to make a lot of new acquaintances in the process) began to ask me my business. I retaliated by inquiring about his views on politics. Young Hopeful explained that he was at heart a Non-Co-operator, but then there was no money in Non-Co-operation. So he had become a Co-operator, and was seeking Government employment. If, however, he unfortunately failed to secure an appointment he would then feel free to return to his first love. This is a common type of Indian student, though not exactly the best.

A more creditable but more dangerous type I met a little later in the person of a young Mohammedan school teacher. He was explaining that as a result

of the Turkish victories he was hoping to see a brotherhood of Moslem nations. Arabia he regarded as a rebel country guilty of treason against the Moham-medan world. Rebellion in India he would not regard as an equally heinous crime as no religious question would be involved. As to Mesopotamia he did not think the British would be able to keep their footing there ; the Arabs would be too turbulent for them. It would continue to be a country of tribal wars for an indefinite period. After all such a life was in many ways preferable to the routine existence in India. He was a shikari and used to hardship, and a life of danger and excitement had attractions for him. I remonstrated, pointing out that my Irish correspondents assured me that a relapse into barbarism produced an existence that was brutish and dull rather than exciting. But he would not have it. " Still there must be a kind of charm about a life like that."

He meant what he said, and he was quite a capable-looking boy and not so young either. It must be the type that has given so much trouble in Ireland. I doubt there are more like him scattered up and down this country, especially among the Moham-medans.

Whenever I ask the younger men here what they make of the Irish situation, they all draw the moral that force is the right way to get concessions out of England. Very few of them are at all impressed by the present anarchy in Ireland, or show any anxiety about the result of letting anarchy loose in India. Their general attitude was put to me concisely the other day by a critic : " They have been taught that out of chaos comes order. ' Put the whole damn

thing in the melting-pot,' they say. 'Something better than the present order is sure to come out of it in a few years, more or less.' "

I don't think much of this reading of history, but it is undoubtedly all the fashion here.

## XL

### THE INDIAN SOLDIER

AGRA, *October 1.*

WHILE in the Punjab I took such opportunities as offered to learn what I could chiefly from Indian sources, of the state, of feeling in the Indian army. I got but little information. Intentionally or unintentionally,<sup>1</sup> the military authorities have contrived to draw a curtain that screens off the life of the army from the life of the civil population. The educated Indian is generally utterly ignorant of what is going on in the army, and I could not learn much from him. Still, as the subject is of the first importance I had better give you such information as I did succeed in obtaining.

I have mentioned already that there are plenty of returned Sikh soldiers, including some commissioned officers, in the thick of the Akali movement. I saw them in gaols, and there were many of them among the men beaten at Guru ka Bagh. One of the men killed by the police in an affray in the neighbourhood was a pensioned soldier. Now and then one hears of Sikh soldiers with their regiments getting into trouble for displaying their sympathy with the Akali movement too ostentatiously. But the general

<sup>1</sup> Unintentionally, I am told by those who are in a position to know and I am quite ready to believe them. But the curtain is there all the same.

trend of the evidence I got was to the effect that in the regiments even the Sikh shows little outward sign of sympathy with the political and religious movements that excite the emotions of the civil population. Discipline is good, and the English officer in Indian regiments is still extraordinarily successful in winning the confidence of his men—far more successful than his civilian brother is in winning the confidence of the people of his district, so my Indian informants tell me. The pay and position of the Indian soldier have been considerably improved since the war, and this has undoubtedly had a powerful effect in keeping him contented. One officer in an Indian regiment, which contained a Sikh company, said to me that as a matter of fact he could not remember a time when the Indian soldier appeared outwardly better satisfied. Pensioned Indian officers told me the same, and further confirmation came from returned soldiers who had thrown in their lot with the Akalis. These men were bitter about the *gurdwara* question, but when I asked them about their life in the army they mentioned only a few minor grievances and they evidently did not take these very seriously. In general they admitted that while they were with their regiments they were pretty well off and had not thought much about politics or the *gurdwaras*.

Indeed, those who wish to tamper with the army seem to have come to the conclusion that it pays best not to make a direct attack on the regiments but to try to get at the men's families in their villages, using either oppression, threats, or persuasion. I have heard from two or three different sources that pressure is actually being brought to bear on the

families of Sikh soldiers, and that it is not easy to meet these tactics. And it is not impossible to make a recruiting ground either barren or dangerous. I doubt whether the army is either able or anxious to procure many Sikh recruits from the Punjab at the present moment.

It seems that the Sikhs in the army are nearer being disaffected than the men of any other community in the army. The extreme Khilafatists have undoubtedly made great efforts to influence the Mohammedan troops, but they have achieved surprisingly little. No serious attempt appears to have been made to shake the allegiance of the Hindu soldiery. But though the men with the regiments show little outward sign of unrest, it is by no means certain that they do not feel more than they show. A Non-Co-operator whom I found residing in a cantonment bazaar assured me that they do, and English officers have told me that one never can be quite confident that one knows what the feeling really is. At least the army authorities are not asleep. I ran across a non-official Indian organisation encouraged by them to keep the Indian soldier acquainted with the Government's side of the case in the current political and religious controversies.

When all is said and done, the fact remains that you can't keep the Indian army entirely cut off from the currents of thought and emotion that are at work among the surrounding civil population. There are the ideas the new recruit brings with him, the ideas he gets in his letters from home, the ideas he gets when he goes back to his village on furlough, and the ideas he picks up in the cantonment bazaar where, as I have said, you will find Non-Co-operators

residing, less vocal perhaps than those you meet outside military areas but not therefore less bitter. Sooner or later, as education and communications improve, the Indian army must come to feel in sympathy with the feelings of their fellow-countrymen ; and then where shall we be ?

“ What about the Indian officer ? Is he beginning to complain for want of equal status, power, prospects, and pay ? ” I asked that question often. A few men answered “ Yes.” But the better opinion seems to be as follows : “ The Indian officer of to-day is generally a man of a respectable family with military traditions but little scholarship. He probably enlisted as a sepoy and rose from the ranks. He knows that his education is not good enough to make it possible for him to replace the British officer. He suspects that if the British officer is ever replaced by the Indian it will be by the educated Indian without military traditions, a class of which he is jealous and distrustful.”

I asked a few English soldiers what they thought about this. If the army is really going to be Indianised, where will the officers come from ? They thought the only solution of the problem would be to catch the sons of the old officer class young and give them a scientific education. They did not think the average educated Indian had enough toughness to stand the hardships of life on the North-west Frontier.

I doubt whether they are right. In the first place, it would be impossible to persuade the Indian politician to acquiesce in the policy of reserving a military college for a particular class. Then I doubt whether there really is so little toughness in

the educated class as the soldier supposes. It is true that the tradition in which an Indian boy grows up is not, or was not, such as to dispose him to a life of adventure. Twelve years ago I came upon a book which an Indian schoolmaster had given his boys, aged about twelve, to read for amusement. The hero was a boy of fourteen. His crowning achievement was to oust the wicked uncle from the property which he had fraudulently induced the widowed mother to surrender. This was done not *vi et armis*, but by a precocious display of eloquence and legal acumen which appealed successfully to the heart and reason of the District Judge. I remember thinking that English boys of the same age would probably be reading *The Young Yaegers*, *The Cruise of the Cachalot*, *Midshipman Easy*, *Treasure Island*, and other books that concern themselves but little with the civil courts and a great deal with hunting and fighting.

But though there is this difference in the upbringing, and though the sun may sap an unfair share of India's energy, still I believe educated India's reputation has suffered from unfriendly or too rigorous critics. For example, a Forest Officer, an austere man who spared others not much and himself not at all, was contending that the Brahmins, the very best of them, have always something lacking in them. They always just fail in a crisis. "The other day," he said, "I was walking through the forest with a Brahmin Ranger, a smart fellow and a very good fellow, too, on the whole. On the way we met a rarish snake, a poisonous one that I had been commissioned to collect alive for a friend at home who was making a study of snakes. So I collected it and was carrying



it along." "How do you do that?" "Oh, run a gun barrel up along its back, pressing it down till you reach the head, and then catch it behind the head at the neck and you can carry it quite easily. Well, I was carrying it along like that when we saw a bird that I wanted to shoot for another man. So I asked the Ranger to hold the snake for me till I got a shot. He came up all right, apparently willing enough, and I showed him how to hold it. But at the last moment, just as I was letting go, he shrank back and we jolly nearly got bitten, both of us. Now if he'd been a white man he wouldn't have done that." "If he'd been me, he'd have told you to take the damn thing to hell with you yourself," was the comment of a much-respected engineer. But the educated Indian does not often find an advocate endowed with so much humanity and common sense. He is oftener judged by the too rigorous standard of the Forest Officer.

Yet in spite of his environment, the sun, and unfriendly judges, he is yearly giving fresh proof of his adaptability to conditions that were once thought too hard for him. Once we were told the Brahmin would never make a surgeon. To-day Brahmin surgeons threaten to crowd out the Englishman. A little while back I heard the following from the head of a technical institute, a roughish Englishman with no special partiality for the Indian: "Ten years ago when you got the Indian B.A. into a workshop it was the deuce and all to persuade him that he really had to sweat himself and get his hands dirty. To-day the feeling is quite different. Your young B.A. gets down into the machinery in a way that does you good to see." The other day the Principal of the Agricul-

tural College in the Punjab said much the same to me about the change in the attitude of his students towards the plough.

The Afghan knife and the bullet are no doubt several degrees less attractive than the plough and the oil engine. All the same, economic pressure works wonders, and there are swarms of Indian B.A.'s hard put to it to find employment. When the Indianisation of the army really comes, I think the Indian educated class will be found supplying the officers, not all of them the very best of officers, but as good probably as Turkish officers or Greek officers, and perhaps just a trifle better.

## XLI

### NEAR EAST REACTIONS IN INDIA

AGRA, *October 5.*

**M**OHAMMEDANS of all sorts, educated and uneducated, loyalist and secessionist, are immensely elated by the recent Turkish successes, and they suspect that a great section, if not the whole of the British people, has an unfair Christian prejudice against the Turk. They see proof of this in the conduct of local Europeans, who failed to show sympathy with their enthusiasm for the victory. In one town it became known that the superintendent of police had an armed force in readiness on the night when the Mohammedans celebrated the victory. This was a not unreasonable precaution against the danger that the Mohammedans might be carried by their enthusiasm the length of looting Hindu shops. But even educated Mohammedans thought the superintendent of police would have done better if he had come and been hail-fellow-well-met and taken a leading part in letting off the fireworks. Again, the Mohammedan students in one college invited their Christian professors to a dinner to celebrate the Turkish victory. The professors regretfully felt bound to decline a dinner in honour of the overthrow of British policy, however much they might disapprove that policy. This, too, was construed as "want of sympathy." Similarly in great matters the Mohammedans are watching

jealously for any attempt by Great Britain to prevent the Turk from reaping the full fruits of his victory.

The situation is less alarming than might have been expected. The Mohammedan of the bazaar shows no sign of allowing his elation to hurry him into acts of violence in the absence of provocative news. The educated Mohammedan is frankly amused by the humiliating downfall of Mr. Lloyd George's policy. His temper is much less on edge than it was when that policy still appeared to have some chance of keeping its footing. Now that he feels pretty confident of Turkey's future he has time to think of his own. When he does so he finds himself in an apparently enviable position. The Hindu, the French, and the Russian are bidding for his friendship. But when he comes to examine their offers a little closely he has an uneasy feeling that perhaps the old British alliance would pay him best in the long run.

"Suppose that peace is made promptly and that the peace gives Turkey all she really wants, what then? What will become of all the energy that the Indian Mohammedan is now putting into the championship of Turkey's cause? Will it be diverted into a demand for a British withdrawal from Mesopotamia, or will it go to reinforce the Hindu demand for Swaraj?" I have put that question pretty often to Hindus and Mohammedans. As to Mesopotamia, the fact seems to be that the Mohammedan is inclined to regard our mandate there as a convenient grievance to be cherished and cast in our teeth when any bargaining is to be done. But there would not be much driving power behind the demand for withdrawal. In making inquiries on this point I came, not for the first time, on the fact that pilgrims going to Mecca have a pretty

rough time of it with the Arabs between authorised regulations and taxes and unauthorised extortions and highway robberies. Only to-day a Mohammedan was explaining to me that he thought the British Government, without actually interfering in Arabia, should induce the Arabs to mend their ways! The example of Arabia made him conclude that the presence of British troops in the neighbourhood of the holy places of Mesopotamia should not be regarded as an unmixed evil.

As to the possibility of Mohammedan energy being diverted into the Swaraj campaign, the evidence I got on that point seemed to me conclusive.

When I was in the Punjab there were special forces at work rubbing the old sore. It was hardly fair to estimate the true value of the newly-formed Mohammedan-Hindu friendship in those trying circumstances. But in the United Provinces conditions are normal, and I am therefore the more impressed by what I hear of the feelings with which the two communities regard each other. Briefly speaking, the Hindu is aware of Mohammedan martial traditions and the martial spirit fostered by the Mohammedan religion. He fears a Mohammedan Raj based on force and an alliance with foreign Mohammedan Powers. The Mohammedan is aware of the Hindu superiority in numbers and education, and he is afraid of a Swaraj Constitution based on majority rule and intellectual qualifications. "If there are only twenty Mohammedans in a village and 200 Hindus the Hindus will be in terror of the Mohammedans." So a Hindu Nationalist. "If you give us Swaraj to-day the Mohammedans will cut our throats to-morrow." So a conservative old Hindu

doctor. As to the Mohammedans, I had expected to find at least among the students a majority who were Indians first and Mohammedans afterwards. But even among the students the real thoroughgoing Nationalist is rare. "Not 20 per cent. believe in Swaraj," said a Mohammedan teacher. "Not 5 per cent. desire Swaraj," said a senior student. "Even to-day when our students have to fill up a form showing their nationality, the Mohammedans enter themselves as Arabs (if they claim Arab descent) or Mohammedans rather than as Indians," said the tutor of many Mohammedans. As to the elder men, a very shrewd and experienced lawyer gave me the following estimate, which differs but little from the estimate I got in the Punjab: "Twenty per cent. of the educated Mohammedans are rank Conservatives afraid of any change. Sixty per cent. are Nationalists like myself, but we want the British Government to retain power to prevent the Hindu majority from riding roughshod over us. Not more than 20 per cent. are prepared to trust the interests of their community to the goodwill of the Hindus or to the binding power of paper guarantees. As to the illiterate Mohammedans they can easily be swayed by the cry, 'Religion in danger.' So to-day the extremists can reckon on their support. Even the Mohammedan villager and his wife are at this moment full of zeal for the Khilafat. I have heard the children in country villages singing Khilafat songs. But it is only the religious stimulus that will rouse them. They are not going to exert themselves to set up a Hindu Raj, nor are they simple enough to believe that the Hindu will help them to restore the Mohammedan Raj."

From my own observations I should say that this man's estimate was not far from the mark. I have met some genuine, whole-hearted Mohammedan Nationalists in the United Provinces, but not many. Not everyone who professes himself a whole-hogger would care to submit to cross-examination on oath. "Look at X," said an old and honest Mohammedan loyalist to me. "He is a great Nationalist now, and wants Swaraj at once. He's a friend of mine. He and I were boys together, and I know what he really thinks. He's not a bad fellow, but he has very little property, and a man must support his family. He gets paid for his propaganda work for Swaraj. But would he vote for Swaraj if he had the chance? Not he. I know what he really thinks. We are seventy million Mohammedans against two hundred and fifty million Hindus. We can't afford to risk Swaraj, and we know it."

Perhaps he is right. After all Mr. Gandhi, too, held that Hindu Mohammedan unity was an indispensable preliminary to Swaraj. One thing at least is clear. Mr. Gandhi was wrong in supposing that permanent unity could be achieved by an alliance against a common enemy. If Britain can come to a friendly understanding with Turkey, the Hindu-Mohammedan alliance will be at an end, and the only danger is that the Mohammedan may prove inconveniently conservative.

"Where, then, would you like to see the Indian Mohammedan turn his energies?" I asked of a big Mohammedan doctor, who had explained to me that thirty years must elapse before Indian Mohammedans could agree to Swaraj.

"Why not social reform? Look at the effect of

our purdah system. Who should be a boy's best friend and teacher till he's twelve years old? The mother, of course. What kind of a friend or teacher can the mother be when she has to spend all her life behind the curtain? That is the real reason why we Mohammedans are so backward in education. It's not learning the Koran, as some people think."



## XLII

### CONSTRUCTIVE THOUGHT IN INDIA

LUCKNOW, *October 22.*

I AM getting a little tired of the destructive side of Indian Nationalism, the urge to get quit of foreign rule cost what it may. Is there any constructive side? Has the Indian any ideas about the political, social, or religious structure that is to be built up under Swaraj? From time to time, and especially when talking to the younger men, I have tried to get an answer to this question. Before stating my results—which are to me a little disappointing—I should first make it clear that I have been questioning only the average educated Indian, not picked leaders like Rabindranath Tagore or Mr. Gandhi. Those leaders have of course been thinking beyond the elimination of British control from India. But when one comes down to the average educated man one is tempted to suspect that Nationalism operates as a disease concentrating attention on a single sore and inhibiting the free play of thought.

To take first my search for constructive political thought. The Moderates appear to contemplate taking over the Montagu-Chelmsford constitution with the minimum of change. They see each provincial Government provided with a Parliamentary party system and a Cabinet on the English model. I

find it hard to reconcile the party and Cabinet system with communal representation, which is apt in practice to mean a minority party that never can hope to obtain a majority. But this question troubles the Moderate not at all. The Moderate talks of an extended franchise and an educated electorate, but he is not clear which should come first, education or the franchise. He admits that the Central Government must be strong enough to overrule the provincial Governments, but he will not explain how the necessary strength is to be secured. He looks forward to increased expenditure on education and sanitation and a reduction in taxation. He means to curtail the cost of the Indian army and to build an Indian navy. He wants to revive the martial spirit of India and to show Western nations the way to perpetual peace.

As to the Gandhian Non-Co-operator, he will first tell you that he expects Swaraj in two or three years. Ask him then to give you a notion of the future Swaraj constitution, and he will answer: "You have not observed that this is just what Mr. Gandhi has always refused to do?" I answer: "Indeed I have observed that, and therefore feel a difficulty in meeting those critics who denounce Mr. Gandhi's movement as purely destructive." "Perhaps, after all, we shall take over the existing machinery of government." "If so, is it wise to accustom the masses to regard that machinery—e.g. the police—with hatred and contempt?" "I admit that is a weak point in our tactics. Some ill-feeling was undeniably generated in this province in the minds of the masses. I sometimes think that our best course is to attain Swaraj by Swadeshi alone. When Lanca-

shire sees that we have all adopted khaddar she will fear for her trade and force the British Government to grant Swaraj." "Do I understand that you are prepared to drop khaddar when you have got Swaraj? If not, how can khaddar help you?"

Then my friend shifts his ground and comes to one of the few practically helpful ideas in the Non-Co-operators' programme, the idea of simplifying life and dispensing with or resisting the introduction of unnecessary Western elaborations. Fingers were made before forks. Use them, and let each man do his own washing-up after meals. You can sit on the ground as well as in a chair—that is, if you are broken to it young enough. There is a very considerable saving on school and office equipment if your scholars and clerks are not too proud to squat on the floor and write at a desk raised twelve inches above ground level. Before Mr. Gandhi's day there was a most pernicious tendency to copy Western extravagance and to resent any suggestion that the East would do well to retain its old habits of economy. I remember a misunderstanding between a European district officer and a newly-formed village council which wished to spend a whole's year's income on providing tables and chairs for the village elders to sit on at their monthly meetings. None of them would ever have dreamt of sitting in a chair if they had not felt it desirable to impress the village with a proper sense of their dignity. Having these village elders in my memory, I was pleasantly surprised when I visited a new Non-Co-operating university to find the students seated on the floor taking notes on sociology from the lectures of an M.A., Oxon.

To the well-to-do and to the middle-class Indian the rough, white khaddar dress stands for this idea of economy and plain living. To the poor it promises the revival of cottage industries. It is unfortunate that most Non-Co-operators have made a fetish of the spinning-wheel and forget that there are other industries that might be developed and other economies that might be made. Still, I think it must be admitted that the ideas behind the khaddar campaign have had some wholesome effect. A rich young spendthrift told me that he had reduced his tailor's bill from Rs.200 to Rs.50 per annum. I am told that the latter sum is still nearly double what an Indian student ought to spend. Even so his father probably feels grateful to Mr. Gandhi. Indeed, I think some of us in England might benefit if Mr. Gandhi would come and explain how this part of his doctrine could be adapted to suit English conditions. Perhaps Sir George Lloyd could spare him to us for a couple of months.

To return to politics. One genuine Indian political idea I did come across more than once in unexpected places. I think I heard it first from an Indian doctor. He recognised the right of the illiterate masses to have some influence on the Government ; at the same time he feared that under the present electoral system they will always be led away by the man who is least scrupulous about making promises. He wanted each village to elect its own village elders. These elders should be not only a village Government, they should also be the electors to return members to the District Board. The District Board members should elect the members of the Provincial Legislative Council. Separate provision on similar lines should

be made for the representation of the towns and of minority communities. There is some reason to think that this system of indirect election is better suited to Indian ideas and Indian conditions than direct election by unwieldy constituencies and illiterate electors who can have no personal knowledge of the candidates.

Allied to this is the idea I got from another Indian doctor high up in Government service and from the ryots in Bardoli Taluk—that is, the view that all district officers should be the servants of the local District Board, not liable to or eligible for transfer from one place to another. They would then make it their first aim to be on good terms with their neighbours. Now, if a station is an unpleasant or an unprofitable one, the dispensary doctor spends all his energy in seeking to get transferred to another station. He is exceedingly anxious to please his departmental superior and his departmental superior's clerks at a headquarters 200 miles away. "As to pleasing your neighbours—well, it is always more satisfactory to be on good terms with your neighbours, but at the worst you are not likely to be more than two years in the station. So, after all, it does not matter much if you are not always as considerate and helpful as a sick child's mother would wish the doctor to be." So, too, with the police, the magistrate, the tax collector, the agricultural expert, and the rest. There is no doubt that the transfer system is about the worst vice of the centralised Indian bureaucracy. It has done more than anything else to prevent the English official from establishing human relations with the people.

Leaving politics for social and economic questions,

I find very little trace of an open struggle between an Eastern and a Western idea of civilisation, unless, indeed, you consider forks and chairs as the essential marks of Western civilisation. Mr. Gandhi is, sometimes at least, a real Easterniser, but in this respect he seems to be in a minority of one. His Easternising ideal appeals to Indian sentiment but not to the Indian intellect. The Arya Samajists, who were once more uncompromising Easternisers than Mr. Gandhi himself, have either shifted their position or lost influence. Educated India has come to recognise the fact that for good or evil she must accept and assimilate Western civilisation. Certain developments she would like to delay or to modify, and she hopes, as other countries have hoped, to make a contribution of her own to the common stock. But the modern system of communications has made it impossible for her to cut herself off from the rest of the world. Where there is intercommunication the stronger civilisation will drive out the weaker. She knows that, and she does not underestimate the strength of Western civilisation.

So I seldom or never meet an Indian who seriously means to exclude industrialism from India. A few ardent spirits even express the hope that with a proper tariff India may within five years become one of the leading industrial countries of the world. The majority do not go so far as that, but they all seem anxious to industrialise India more or less thoroughly. They express a pious but singularly vague hope that "in doing so we shall avoid the evils that have attended industrialism in the West."

I have picked up one or two other hints about the economic future of India under Swaraj. A very

high official, for whose shrewdness I have the profoundest respect, once said to me : " The root of India's troubles is in her over-sanguine faith in the doctrine that a man is entitled to receive six days' pay for four days' work." A little later I heard much the same opinion expressed by a prominent Non-Co-operator. He had taken his degree at an English university, and when he returned to India he observed that the Indian coolie takes three times as long as the Britisher to whitewash a ceiling. Of course he held the British Raj in India responsible for this, and he explained that under Swaraj everyone would have to work and everyone would have to work hard. I asked how this effect was to be produced, and I was told it would follow naturally. I then asked " Why ? " Unluckily, I could not comprehend the argument that followed. I think it was Bergsonian, and I am not a philosopher. But it seemed to me to run something like this : Unless everyone works harder under Swaraj, Swaraj will be a failure. But *ex hypothesi* Swaraj is going to be a success. Therefore everyone will work harder under Swaraj.

Next day I went down to the bazaar and talked to a well-to-do Indian shopkeeper. I asked him why he and his fellow-shopkeepers were all so anxious for Swaraj. " Well, you see," he said, " it is like this. When I was a boy we were a family of twenty members. Two of us worked, and they earned enough to support all the rest of us, and we used to sit at home at our ease. But in these hard times every member of a family has to go out and work to earn his living. When Swaraj comes we think things will be as they were before. It will be enough if two of us go out to

work. The rest will be able to sit at home with their bellies full."

In regard to education there is even less sign of constructive thought. There is little effective support for the reformers who aim at giving higher education through the vernaculars. There is a loud clamour for vocational and technical education, but when you try to see what is behind the clamour you find that the new demand is for an education that will entitle the recipient to a post in some large commercial or industrial establishment, just as the old demand was for an education that would give a claim to a post in Government service.<sup>1</sup> The general view of education is distressingly materialistic. A member of the Indian Legislative Assembly said to me: "I have no patience with this talk about educational ideals. We are too poor for them. Let the educationist first give us the education that will help us to fill our bellies, and afterwards we can talk about his educational ideals." There, I fear, spoke a true representative of his people.

As to the existing social system, caste, communalism, and the rest, the educated Indian has no special affection for these things. But he realises the strength of custom, and he has no hope of breaking down the barriers all at once. He has a vague expectation that education will gradually eat away the iron. And so with infant marriage, the remarriage of widows, and the other social questions.

The Indian view of women's place in life has not yet been entirely modernised. I asked a young

<sup>1</sup> This is hardly fair. It is, I believe, a fact that facilities for technical education fall short of the country's immediate requirements and there is good cause for complaint.



Hindu M.A. whether he would be glad to see women in India claim the same freedom as they exercise in the West. He answered: "No. We should like our women to be educated, but we hope that they will always retain their modesty and turn away their heads in the presence of strangers." Another Hindu student told me that he believed in Western education for men, but thought an Eastern education more suitable for Indian women.

One prominent Mohammedan doctor would give women complete freedom, and in his own house he practised what he preached. Another would have women educated, but thought that they should none the less remain behind the purdah. I remember hearing the same position maintained by an old Mohammedan merchant who posed as a reformer.

Even to-day you can meet a few Indian ladies who are Westernised in everything except dress, and whatever the Indian man may wish, the Indian woman is certainly going to insist on getting a Western education. What will happen to the Indian religious and social systems when all the womenfolk of educated India have access to Western thought? The change will be tremendous and incalculable. The immense power of custom in India is derived from the women. The best-educated Indian has a mother or a wife whose education consists of the Hindu tradition. Whatever his intellect may affirm or deny, it is almost impossible for him to take any course that will hurt the feelings of his womenfolk. When his mother and his wife begin to trust their intellects in preference to Hindu tradition, then the binding force of custom will be broken.

## XLIII

### SOME INDIAN RELIGIOUS IDEAS

LUCKNOW, *October 27.*

IS there anything in the common notion that the Indian is more religious, more spiritual, more of an idealist, less a materialist than the European? I have asked that question of teachers, European and Indian, and I have tried to form my own opinion by getting Indians, students and grown men, to talk about their ideals and their religion. I am inclined to accept the findings of an experienced Indian teacher who knew something of Europeans as well as Indians. His verdict was as follows: "Spirituality, a strong and genuine religious tendency, is equally rare East and West. The Indian boy is more impressionable and emotional than the English boy. It is easier to get him to listen to an appeal to his religious sense. Further, thanks to economic and climatic conditions, the Indian has a lower vitality, a weaker grip on life. His instinct of self-preservation is feebler. He is less persevering in the struggle to master circumstances and more willing to resign himself to the will of an unknown power. A life of religious contemplation is therefore easy to him. On the other hand, the Indian student is dreadfully handicapped by his early marriage. The English boy of twenty-two has generally got ideals of some sort and time to think about them. At that

age the Indian is the father of two or three children, and all his thought and effort go into providing a living for his family. He is, therefore, usually the most materialistic of men, small blame to him."

Apart from Mr. Gandhi's teaching the only religious idea I came across among the younger men is the idea of self-sacrifice for one's country or for one's community. That idea is common enough and strong enough ; witness some hundreds of political prisoners, witness the Akalis.

I sometimes meet middle-aged or elderly men who devote a considerable part of their time to religious contemplation. " Their oneness with God," " Sink-ing their personality in the Godhead," " The Godhead manifesting itself in all things, even in that which at first seems painful or disagreeable "—these are the words they use to express their religious feeling. Now and then I am tempted to think that these men value religion chiefly as a sort of patent medicine that saves them from feeling too acutely the annoy-ances and sorrows that are inevitable in this mortal life.

No doubt the countryside is religious after a fashion. But is it more religious than the countryside in Catholic Europe ? I am not sure. You already know something of the strength and weakness of the Irish peasant's religion. I will give you one or two facts that may help you to assess the quality and value of the religion of the Indian countryside. First, to show you its ugly aspect.

A couple of years ago an Indian villager was brought before an Indian magistrate and charged with doing an act calculated to wound the religious susceptibilities of his neighbours. From the magis-

trate's judgment it appears that the man had taken the goddess out of her shrine into the public street and there had beaten her over the head with a slipper, the extreme indignity known to the Hindu code of honour. Yet, the judgment went on, the sympathies of the Court were strongly engaged on the side of the accused. The defence had clearly established the fact that the accused had long been most regular, scrupulous, and even lavish in the worship of the goddess. On behalf of the goddess it had not been proved that even one single ceremony had been omitted. Yet in spite of this piety the accused had recently sustained a series of the most provoking losses that could possibly befall a man. Within one month both his plough bullocks, his wife and his son had died. These circumstances went a long way to extenuate the heinousness of the crime. His irritation with the goddess, the Court could not but feel, was natural, excusable, all but justifiable. On the other hand it could not be denied that his action had been a serious shock to the religious feelings of his neighbours. It would establish a very dangerous precedent if the Court were to hold that a man was free to indulge his private animosities irrespective of the grave risks to which his action might expose his fellow-villagers. A sentence of one month's rigorous imprisonment appeared to the Court to meet the needs of the case.

Now we may look at a more attractive side of the villagers' religion. Two coolies were walking into market talking together. The first was expatiating on the hard work he had done for his master and the heavy crops he had been successful in raising for him. The second commiserated him on the smallness

of the reward he had got or was ever likely to get. "What matter?" the first replied. "Because I always work honestly and faithfully, God will surely reward me some day." That was overheard by a university authority and quoted to me as a proof of the prevalence of religious feeling in the countryside. I was able to cap it with the following. Some time ago I was inquiring about an old acquaintance, a non-Brahmin Government servant who had retired on pension. I got the following answer from a clever young Brahmin lawyer: "Oh, X is doing very well. His three sons have all made a good start in life. You know the people say that because he was unfortunate in getting promotion, though he always served the Sircar loyally and honestly, therefore God, to reward him, gave him three good boys for his sons."

Again, the other day I was talking through an interpreter to an old school Hindu village landlord. He complained of a falling-off in the productivity of the soil. I asked him what the cause was. The first reason he gave was the increasing sinfulness of the world. The second, which he did not connect with the first, was the rise in the price of fuel in the towns. The price is now so high that the people, instead of returning any of their cattle's dung to the land, make it all into cakes and carry it into the town to sell there as fuel. They are even beginning to adulterate cattle dung with earth. That sin at least will bring its own punishment, sure enough.

Well, that is what I have gathered about the average Indian's ideas of religion. In the countryside religion is a thing of rewards and punishments, sometimes almost a matter of contract. To the older educated men it is mystical contemplation,

which is at least useful as a preventive against worry. To the young Nationalist it is the desire to sacrifice himself for the good of his country without much tedious and meticulous inquiry as to what "the good of his country" may be, or how it is to be secured.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I feel shame at the meagreness and inadequacy of this chapter and am tempted to supplement its contents. What I wish to suggest is this. The difference between the Indian and the European attitude towards religion is the result, not of any difference in race, but of the difference in the environment, and in the tradition which is mainly the outcome of environment. In the Indian's environment the sun is, I suspect, the most important factor. It saps his energy, lowers his vitality and weakens his grip on life. It has not been able to check his intellectual activity but it widens the interval between his thought and his action and it makes him prefer mystical contemplation and metaphysical speculations which do not require to be verified by tedious experiments to the application of his intellect to the world in which he lives. The uncertainties of life in India have given him a bias in the same direction. Hence Indian tradition exalts metaphysical speculation and mystical contemplation and the asceticism and contempt for the good things of this world which accompany metaphysics and mysticism. So strong is this tradition that an Indian saint like Mr. Gandhi is easily accepted as a political leader while Indian politicians are under the painful necessity of giving up their incomes and posing as saints. Since the sun has widened the interval between thought and action, Indian tradition is little interested in the effect of speculation and contemplation upon conduct. "Do not ask us: we are holy men," was the reply which a lady missionary got when she asked two religious devotees to help her in carrying a cholera-stricken outcaste to a place where his sufferings could be alleviated.

A religion which exalts speculation and contemplation stimulates, and is necessarily tolerant of free thought in regard to matters of belief. But since it concerns itself little with morals, the moral code is determined by custom and tradition even more than in England, and the Indian is even less ready than the European to allow the intellect to criticise the prevalent moral code. This, I think, is the reason why in the next chapter we find Mr. Devadas Gandhi apparently unwilling to allow thought free play on certain moral problems.

## XLIV

### TWO REPRESENTATIVES OF YOUNG INDIA

LUCKNOW, *October 27.*

THE other day I was lucky enough to meet two very favourable representatives of Young India. They were good enough to talk to me, I think, quite freely, and I hope they will pardon me if I pass on something of what I gathered from them as fairly as I can. The first of the two men was Mr. Jowarlal Nehru, son of Pundit Moti Lal Nehru, one of the ablest of the Non-Co-operating leaders. The second was Mr. Gandhi's youngest son, Devadas Gandhi.

Where did I meet them? In gaol, of course. And the friend to whom I owe the introduction was the superintendent of the gaol. Thanks to his patience and courtesy I had an opportunity of talking to these men at some length.

Mr. Jowarlal Nehru is over thirty, though he looks much younger. He was educated at Harrow, took his degree at an English university, was called to the Bar, and returned to practise in India shortly before the outbreak of the war. His father was then a leading lawyer with a very large practice, a wealthy man who lived up to his income and followed Western fashions. The popular legend is that it was the son who first came under Mr. Gandhi's influence. When the son adopted the simple life and devoted himself

to the national cause, his conversion made a convert of the father ; so the legend goes. What struck me most in the son's own account of his life was the steady growth of an impulse to do something, he knew not what, for his country, and the deep satisfaction he felt when Mr. Gandhi at last arose and showed him definite things to do. The definite things, unfortunately, were generally rather barren acts of self-sacrifice, giving up his comfort, giving up his practice, risking and finally courting imprisonment, all with a view to rouse the spirit of his countrymen. The desire to make a sacrifice had evidently been and still, I think, was very strong in him. I had been told that he was violently anti-English, but I could find no trace of that except that under provocation he became effectively sarcastic about the convenient blindness and deafness of the Englishman which enables him still to picture himself as the Heaven-sent saviour of India, Egypt, and Mesopotamia in spite of the clamorous and conspicuous fashion in which the inhabitants of those three countries are expressing their anxiety to be rid of him. But though the man's intelligence, refinement, and patriotism were very apparent, I failed to get from him any clear idea of how he proposed to win Swaraj or what he proposed to do with it when he had won it. After saying good-bye to him I was introduced to his companion, Mr. Devadas Gandhi.

This boy is aged twenty-two. He has spent almost the whole of his life in his father's society, and has picked up his education from him. Like his father he is not much to look at. But when you come to talk to him you find that he is a thorough good boy, about as intelligent and about as well brought up



as you would wish your son to be. He accepts most of his father's doctrines in their less drastic forms—e.g. he does not like industrialism and would avoid it as far as possible, but does not think India can do without it altogether. In politics I could not make out that he had any very clear idea of the form that Swaraj would or should take. He expressed the usual desire to see India economically self-sufficient, able to produce everything that she needs, opening her ports to other countries as a favour rather than for her own advantage. Admitting that India's immediate need is to learn to do for herself a good many things that other countries now do for her, I suggested that "the ideal of a self-sufficing country is nevertheless a rather dangerous ideal scarcely consistent with the sound doctrine 'Confidence begets confidence and distrust distrust,' of which your countrymen are so fond. The ideal of interdependent and mutually serviceable countries is at least as attractive and not more Utopian. The morality that holds good for individuals should hold good for nations. I know no self-sufficient man among my friends, and if I did I should be as ready to drop his acquaintance as he mine." Devadas Gandhi was, I understood, ready enough to accept this point of view with some reservations. What struck me was that it seemed to be, if not new to him, at least less familiar than I had expected.

Turning to education I found him properly keen on education through the vernacular. Indian culture was to be acquired through study of the vernacular literature. English he would leave optional. I suggested that it should be compulsory at least for university students, seeing that without English an

Indian student has no access to Western thought. I pointed to his father's own debt to Tolstoy, read in an English translation. He put his faith in translations into the vernacular. I maintained that it would take two or three generations to produce tolerable translations of even half the important matter that is printed in English. Even so he was not prepared to admit that English must long be an essential part of the best Indian education.

As to the position of women, he would allow them all the education and all the freedom that can be allowed to men.

I next wanted to ascertain what he understood by the word "religion." So I told him of the trouble between an old Jain Non-Co-operator and a gaol superintendent. The superintendent wanted the Jain to start work at seven o'clock in the morning. The Jain was quite willing to do so provided he could say his prayers first. The superintendent had no objection to that. But then it appeared that a Jain cannot say his prayers till after he has washed, and there happened to be a water scarcity, and the municipality did not let water into the gaol before 7 a.m. Hence the Jain could not say his prayers before 7.30, and was three-quarters of an hour late for his work. The superintendent was annoyed and maintained that there could be no genuine religious objection to saying your prayers before washing. I said I rather sympathised with the superintendent's view, though I should have guessed that it would be less trouble to arrange for a special early bath than to argue the point with the Jain. Devadas Gandhi agreed that if he had been in the Jain's place he would not have made this a matter of conscience. But he felt much

sympathy with the Jain. He was inclined to attach a good deal of importance to the regular observance of forms and ceremonies. At least, he said, he looked with great suspicion on those who made loud professions of religious feeling while claiming freedom from the observance of all forms. He suspected that the decline in church-going in the West signified a real decline in genuine religion. I said I seemed to remember a religious Teacher who expressed suspicion of those who made loud professions of religion while carefully fulfilling all the forms and ceremonies that their law enjoined. If my memory held, that Teacher proposed to test a man's religion by its fruits, the man's conduct and actions. Devadas Gandhi agreed that this was the crucial test, but doubted whether it was safe to dispense with forms and ceremonies. He thought they might be necessary to keep religion alive in men's minds. I said perhaps he was right. Certainly that was the view taken by our clergy.

I tried him then another way. "What do you mean to do about religious and moral education in India? Do you accept the Western view, which, as far as I understand it, is this: there are differences of opinion about the age at which freedom should be granted, but we are all pretty well agreed that no boy's or girl's education is complete till he or she has been allowed, and even encouraged, to examine for himself or herself every possible opinion on religious, moral, and social problems, and to accept or reject, as may seem good to him or her. We recognise that this will mean the upsetting of many old traditions, customs, codes, conventions, and laws that are very sacred to us. That will hurt, but we feel that none

the less we must give our children freedom of thought. Freedom of thought to us seems worth all the rest. Do you accept that ? ” No, he would not go quite so far as that. There are some books he would not even allow to be translated into the vernacular, for the present at least.<sup>1</sup> “ After all, we are a nation in the making. It is well to be cautious.”

I said that savoured to me dangerously of the Moderate heresy, and that I should have to report him to his father, and so said good-bye regretfully.

<sup>1</sup> For an explanation of Mr. Devadas Gandhi's attitude, see the note at the end of the preceding chapter. Another possible explanation is the fact that the English puritan ideal of courage, truthfulness and chastity is one of the ideals which have had a great influence on Mr. Gandhi himself, and no doubt his son was brought up to reverence it. Indeed, this puritanic ideal has been very influential now for many years among the Indian educated class. In 1910 it came to my notice that at weddings in “ respectable ” Indian houses of a certain caste the gramophone had been substituted for the Nautch girls whose presence was required by tradition.

## XLV

### THE TENANCY PROBLEM IN OUDH

ALLAHABAD, *October 29.*

IT is impossible to write about the politics of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh without first giving some explanation of the position of the Oudh Talukdars and of their relations with their tenants.

When we annexed Oudh in 1856 we found about two-thirds of the province in the possession of some three hundred Talukdars or "estate owners." The majority of these men were Hindus, hereditary feudal chiefs living in the midst of a tenantry composed chiefly of their clansmen. Others were Mohammedans whose ancestors had long since carved out an estate for themselves and their descendants. A few were upstart adventurers who had built up their fortune by means that were fresh in the memory of living men.

Immediately after the annexation a summary settlement of the land revenue was made by men of the "Thomasonian" school, which held that the mission of the British in India was to fortify the position of the actual cultivator against the exactions of his overlords, to strengthen the weak, and perhaps also to pull down the mighty from their seats. A summary inquiry showed that the Talukdars had taken advantage of the weakness of the pre-existing

Government to extend their control over villages to which they had no rights. The settlement officers held that in making a first summary and tentative settlement the presumption should always be in favour of the small man and against the Talukdar. Very likely they pushed their principle too far. One champion of the Talukdars complained that these zealous young men thought ruining a Talukdar "better sport than shooting a tiger." Anyhow, the result of their settlement was to strip the Talukdars of nearly half the villages they had had in their possession.

Then came the Mutiny of 1857. The Talukdars decided to take this chance to restore the *status quo ante*. They revolted, and were strong enough to carry their clansmen with them, though many of these clansmen had benefited at their expense under the summary settlement. Even after the British had regained the upper hand and recaptured Lucknow, the Talukdars retired to the villages and there held out. It became plain that to reduce Oudh piecemeal by force of arms would be a tedious and expensive operation. At the same time it was generally held that the Talukdars had good reason to feel aggrieved by the proceedings taken in the summary settlement. The Viceroy, therefore, offered them a free pardon, the annulment of the summary settlement, and a restoration to their rightful estates. The offer was generally accepted. The Talukdars came in, and a new settlement was made. This time everything was presumed in favour of the Talukdar.

That by itself would not have mattered much. There is a great deal to be said for the big landlord who can afford to be generous, though there is also

something to be said for the small landlord who can oversee everything himself without employing underlings. But the fortunes of the people of Oudh came at this time into the hands of Sir Charles Wingfield, an able local official, who believed not only in big landlords but also in non-interference and freedom of contract between landlord and tenant.

Now over the greater part of India ancient Hindu usage recognised a permanent heritable right of occupancy in the cultivator of the soil, so long at least as he paid his rent. British administrators of the "Thomsonian" school had strengthened this right wherever they found it. They had even created it in certain tracts where it had either never existed or been forgotten during the troubles of the Mohammedan period. Wingfield saw that no such right was recognised in Oudh. He held that the existence of an heritable occupancy right was prejudicial to the best use of the land, and he was determined that the "Thomsonian" school should not be allowed to create such a right in Oudh. After a stiff fight with Sir John Lawrence he carried his point, and some 98 per cent. of the tenants of Oudh remained mere tenants at will up to 1886.

In that year an Act was passed to improve the position of the tenant. This Act gave the tenant security of tenure at a fixed rent for seven years. At the end of the seven years the tenant could be ejected, but even if this were done the rent of the holding could not be enhanced during his lifetime in excess of a fixed and low percentage. It was thought that this rule would deprive the landlord of all motive for ejecting a good tenant. But the intention of the Act was defeated by the simple device of exacting a

premium for the renewal of the tenancy, and, in practice, the Act of 1886 left the tenant almost as much at the mercy of the landlord as he had ever been before. The threat of eviction at the end of the seven-year period was generally enough to bring the sturdiest tenant to his knees. For he knew that he was living in a thickly populated country where vacant holdings were few and only to be obtained by the payment of an extortionate premium. Besides, it might easily happen that every village within ten miles was the property of the landlord who was threatening him with eviction.

Thus when the war broke out the position of the cultivator in Oudh was far more precarious than that of his cousin in any other province of British India. The fact was notorious, and a remedy would have been applied sooner if the Talukdars had not stood ready to resist any attack. But they had organised themselves and made their preparations, and they presented a formidable front. Wingfield had fortified their position by obtaining loosely worded pledges assuring them against any derogation from their rights over their property. Though their number was under three hundred, they were exceedingly wealthy. They still held between them some 4,000,000 acres of cultivated land, about half the land in the province, and their total income must have been between one and two million pounds per annum after the Government land revenue had been paid. They could reckon on the zamindars, the smaller landlords who held the other half of the lands in the province, to support them in opposing any measure designed to strengthen the legal position of the tenants.

Further, they had made themselves exceedingly



useful to the Government. They had given it loyal support and not too much criticism, and they had been most liberal in their donations to all public causes in which the Government had desired them to interest themselves. It is, therefore, not surprising that they succeeded in postponing a further measure of land tenure reform year after year.

In 1914 it was thought that they had reached the end of their tether, and a drastic bill giving occupancy rights to the tenant was then expected. But on the outbreak of the war so controversial a measure had, of course, to be dropped, and the Talukdars again exerted themselves to show their loyalty, giving money generously and helping to find recruits. The end of the war found the land tenures as they were at the beginning, and the Government decided again to postpone action till after the introduction of the Reform scheme.

Then came the Non-Co-operator, who found in the tenants' position a wrong to be righted and a splendid chance of attracting the cultivator into Mr. Gandhi's fold. But the field was not left clear for him. The Moderates, too, were going all out for land reform. High-minded Moderates saw in the existing system all that their liberal tradition had taught them to detest—gross oppression and the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of one irresponsible and unqualified person at the expense of the tillers of the soil. The meaner men were jealous of an aristocracy of Talukdars powerful enough to control the votes of a numerous tenantry, for they saw in it a dangerous competitor in the scramble for power. So at the first election under the Reform scheme the Moderates ran candidates in the Talukdari areas,

promising legislation to improve the position of the tenants as against the Talukdars. The Non-Co-operators appear at least to have refrained from hindering the cause of these candidates, and some startling successes were achieved. But the Talukdars are said to command an actual majority in the Council.

No decisive trial of strength was actually made, for the Governor, Sir Harcourt Butler, succeeded in inducing the Talukdars and Moderates to acquiesce in a compromise bill which gives the tenant security of tenure for life and a fair rent. This bill had become law before the Non-Co-operation agitation reached its height, but its effect was not realised by the tenants in time to keep them from throwing themselves into the arms of the Non-Co-operators. Even now that their faith in the power of Non-Co-operation has been shaken they give the credit for the benefits received to the Non-Co-operator rather than to the Talukdar, the Government, or the Moderate. So I am told by those who are in the best position to judge.

Was the new Act necessary? Is it a satisfactory and final solution of the Oudh tenancy problem? I met various champions of the Talukdars, who explained to me that the old system worked well in practice and was sound in theory. They said:

“The majority of the tenants were the clansmen of the Talukdar. The chief and his clansmen were bound together by ties of blood and old friendship. Have the Moderates been telling you that the Talukdars were in the habit of collecting nazaranas from time to time to meet extraordinary expenses, the hathiana for buying a new elephant, and the more modern motorana for the purchase of a new motor-

car? Quite true, but then remember that every clansman feels a pride in the magnificence of his chief. He likes to think that he owns at least the tip of the elephant's tail, just like the story of the British taxpayer and the chip out of a British battleship. And, apart from sentiment, large ownership is sound in economic theory. You know the difficulties encountered by the agricultural reformer in a district owned by occupancy tenants or Government ryots. Holdings are too small and, small as they are, they do not always form one block. A five-acre holding may consist of half a dozen fields each in a different corner of the village. Further, the small ryot has no capital wherewith to make improvements. He does not even use sufficient manure. The Talukdar formerly had the power and under the new Act he still retains the power, somewhat impaired, I fear, to see that the land gets fair treatment. He can refuse to allow holdings to be further subdivided. He can club together holdings that are too small and consolidate holdings that are scattered. He can supply capital and introduce the use of improved agricultural machinery. But give the tenant a heritable occupancy right and you deprive the Talukdar of all power and all motive to see that the best use is made of the land."

I was a good deal impressed at least by the latter half of this argument. I knew that heritable occupancy rights entail some serious evils. So I took the first chance of going and seeing the results of the Talukdari system on the ground.

Alas! alas! I became converted into a miserable Thomasonian. *A priori* the Talukdar's case was strong, but *a posteriori*—what did I see?

To the eye the fields looked suspiciously small. I saw no motor ploughs or tractors, but plenty of very inferior cattle. The land was fertile, but the people all seemed poor. I could not see a substantial-looking farmer anywhere, or a substantial farmer's house. Indeed, the village houses were as mean as any I have ever seen in barren tracts. No wonder, for if a man is evicted from his holding he may carry away his houses with him, but the site reverts to the landlord. He would be a fool to build a substantial house on such terms. But in any case I doubt whether many of these tenants have much cash to spare for fancy buildings. Questioning the first six men we met, my companion found that the holdings of five of them were below ten acres, while the sixth had a twenty-acre holding. Inquiries elsewhere gave similar results. From a surveyor I learnt that the "fragmentation" of holdings is common, and that the subdivision of holdings goes on unchecked so long as the appropriate nazaranas are forthcoming for renewing the lease. This was confirmed by the villagers on another estate. Tenants supply their own manure or do without it. They can sometimes borrow from the Talukdar for the purchase of seed, but this does not save them from having to seek the aid of the money-lender for other purposes. As they have hitherto had no security of tenure in their lands, the most favourable rate of interest is 24 per cent., whereas in some ryotwari tracts small Government ryots can get what money they need at 12 per cent., or even 9 per cent., on the security of their lands.

I asked about education. A village of twenty-four houses had no literate man in it. Two children were

attending a school. Another group of grown men contained three scholars, but none of them were sending their sons to school, and so in the other villages. The general explanation was that they could not spare their boys from the work in the fields.

I doubt whether the poorest men in these villages were any worse off than the poorest men to be found in villages where the cultivator has security of tenure. The difference lies rather in this. Where there is security of tenure you will generally find a few substantial ryots, able men who have raised themselves above the level of the rest of the villagers and have begun to work with their brains instead of with their hands. In Oudh I could see no such men. Every one was working with his hands all day for his living. If any man was foolish enough to make and save a little money, that would come out of him the next time his lease was to be renewed. So the best men had no motive for trying to do a little better than their neighbours. All remained at a dead level—a level at which a knowledge of anything outside the village is almost impossible.

I questioned men from eight villages, some of them quite near Lucknow. Only one village would admit that it was receiving a newspaper. I think the information given was correct, though the men certainly were apprehensive that receiving a newspaper might constitute an indictable offence. Indeed, it was in this that I seemed to see the most marked difference between these tenants at will and the ryots whom I have met in three other provinces. There I generally found the ryots sufficiently outspoken and fearless. But here was the villager of tradition, the man who is too ignorant and too timid to speak out

in the presence of even the most inoffensive of strangers. For example, in one village we found half a dozen men who were qualified to vote. We asked one whom he had voted for at the last election. He denied that he had ever heard anything about the election. An estate servant who was standing by told us this was not the fact. A "Moderate" organiser had led a batch of a dozen voters from this village to the polling station, and our friend was one of them. Thereupon a village hero was bold enough to confess that that was true; he, too, had gone down to vote. Then, relapsing into caution, he hastily added: "But I was too late to vote, and next time I will vote for the Government." The rest chimed in: "Yes, we will all vote for the Government." I should explain that the Moderate for whom the men had voted was in fact a supporter of the Ministers who are Moderates, opponents of the Talukdars. But the tenant unfortunately identifies the interests of the Talukdars with the interests of Government, for he finds in practice that when he rises against the Talukdar the forces of Government are promptly mobilised to crush him. So in voting against the Talukdar he felt that he was voting against Government, and he was now eager to profess penitence and promise amendment.

What of the plea that the Talukdar is the elder brother of his tenants? I am bound to say that some of the older tenants we saw remembered a golden age when they were under the protection of a good Talukdar, a man who lived on his estate, kept his eyes and ears open, and allowed no one except himself to fleece his tenantry. But for the last thirty years the Talukdars have been building fine

houses in Lucknow and living there, leaving their estates to be managed by underlings or rent farmers. What this means in practice was borne in upon me when I came upon a house worth Rs.8,000 in the middle of a village in which there was no other house worth Rs.80. Inquiry showed that the big house belonged to a man who had secured the farm of the rents for the neighbouring villages. That was only eight years ago. He was then a simple cultivator, no better off than his neighbours. Five years later he built the big house out of his profits.

How did he make such profits? I saw a list of a dozen unauthorised cesses levied by the rent farmers. The list showed the fertility of the farmer's mind. If you wanted to levy a cess you would levy it either on the number of acres a man cultivated or on the number of ploughs he possessed. The rent farmers levied two cesses, one on the acreage, the other on the number of ploughs. Again, you might levy a cess on the outturn. The rent farmer had a cess for that too. The outturn cess might be levied either when the outturn is estimated before harvest or when the crop is measured on the threshing floor. It was doubtful which procedure would be more convenient, so for safety's sake a cess was levied on both occasions. Again, the rent farmer was naturally interested in the domestic happiness of his tenants, so a small cess was levied for each marriage. He was also interested in their morals. So the cess was doubled if the marriage was not in accordance with the best caste usage. The rent farmer was of course a charitable man, so a cess was levied to help him to meet his charitable expenses and so on. Not all rent farmers levied all these cesses. But some levied so

many that the tenants grew confused. To save them from perplexity one kind-hearted rent farmer seems to have lumped all the cesses into one consolidated charge, which he proposed to put at 40 per cent. of the legitimate rent ! All this was of course not in accordance with the wishes or the interests of the Talukdar, but it must, I fear, be admitted that an insecure land tenure does leave room for abuses.

Has the new Act solved the Oudh tenancy problem ? I found the benefits conferred by the Act were beginning to be appreciated even in remote villages. But the Indian tenant will never rest content till he has a heritable occupancy right in the land he cultivates. The Talukdar and the Moderate are alike well aware of this. They know the struggle will be renewed after a few years, and they are making their preparations. The loss which the Talukdar has to fear is not primarily a loss of money. If he were prepared to concede the occupancy right it would be easy for him to strike a bargain that would be very profitable financially. But to concede the occupancy right is to make his tenants independent and to sacrifice his influence over them and, incidentally, over their votes. The educated townsman, whether he be Non-Co-operator or Moderate, is naturally concerned to see the tenant's vote freed from this influence. So the struggle will be a tough one. What will be the future politics of the big Talukdar, the middling Zamindar, and the small tenant ? That is an interesting question to which I shall have to come back another day.



## XLVI

### A SURVEY OF THE UNITED PROVINCES

ALLAHABAD, *October 29.*

A STRANGER visiting the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh gets the impression that the people are less intelligent than the Madrasis, less tough than the Mahrattas, less amiable than the Gujeratis, and less virile than the Punjabis. In the country, and still more in the towns, the lower classes look dull, though it is easy to believe what is said to be the fact, that they are extremely excitable when a stimulus is applied.

These provinces are notoriously backward in education. It seems probable that this is partly the result of the unsatisfactory land tenures. I have already explained that up to 1921 the cultivators in Oudh were little better than tenants at will. In Agra the position is not so bad, but even there it is far from satisfactory; apparently not much more than half the tenants have succeeded in securing an heritable occupancy right.

Another cause of the low average of intelligence and education in these provinces is the presence of some six million untouchables in a total population of 45 millions. These men are mostly chamars. They are leather-workers by caste, but great numbers of them are now general labourers or small cultivators. They are not so downtrodden as their untouchable cousins in Madras. But they have

their wrongs and they are becoming conscious of them, though neither they nor the Government have yet applied themselves seriously to the task of securing redress.

Above the chamars and the cultivating tenants you find in Agra the zamindars, or landlords, mostly small men residing in the villages. They form a substantial landowning middle class, intelligent and independent enough. Even in Oudh you find zamindars of the same type owning that half of the province which is not included in the estates of the Talukdars.

The Talukdars of Oudh, as I have already explained, are wealthy and powerful landlords, many of them men with a passable Western education. They look upon themselves as a landed aristocracy, and they are, in fact, quite as good an aristocracy as you can fairly expect to find in a country where the aristocracy has never possessed the privilege of governing. Turning to the towns, you find the usual lower strata of labourers and small shopkeepers, with the usual upper layer of educated Indian professional men—lawyers, doctors, and officials. Cawnpore is a big industrial centre, but the industries are still largely British-owned and British-managed.

Though the Mohammedans constitute only 14 per cent. of the population of the United Provinces, yet they possess more influence here than in any other province except the Punjab. For the community includes many men of old family, wealth, and education. It is worth noting that in Lucknow there are many influential Mohammedans of the Shia sect, which cares little for the Khilafat but a great deal for the Holy Places in Mesopotamia.

Nowhere in India did the doctrines of Non-Cooperation produce more sudden and startling effects than in the United Provinces. Linking themselves up with the tenants' grievances, they spread to the remotest villages, assuming there a very simple form. "The Gandhi Raj is coming; rents will be lowered and prices will fall; the police and the rent-farmers will trouble us no more." Tenants' unions were formed. In many places legitimate rent and illegitimate cesses were alike withheld, and the landlords were thoroughly alarmed. Racial feeling against the white man and his supporters began to display itself in very ugly forms, both in the towns and in the villages. Evidence on this point comes from Europeans, Americans, and Indians. Not even in the Punjab had I heard so much that was disquieting. I met one European who had had his wrist broken because his servant abused a man who was rude to him. An Indian told me how the people in a small country town refused to allow the corpse of a "Government man" to be carried out till his sons had wrapped it in khaddar. A mass agitation among an illiterate people will not always keep to the rails, even where there is a Mr. Gandhi to direct it. And here, as elsewhere, the mass agitation was attended by a great increase in criminal dacoities, besides the inevitable political riots.

The local Government displayed great patience and waited long—too long, some Indian officials said. Moderate opinion came to the conclusion that something must be done, and when the Government struck it struck with the consent of the Moderate Ministers. The Government struck hard and kept on striking, and it soon became apparent that the masses had

little staying power. All hopes of the Gandhi Raj vanished quickly. Arrears of rent were paid up, and the common people relapsed into their old mood of acquiescence.

But there is a difference. Neither in the town nor in the country have they forgotten the hope that was once raised in them, and they are a little less subservient, a little more independent, and, I fear, a little less friendly. So good observers tell me, Indian and European, and when I questioned some Oudh villagers myself I found the most intelligent of them ready to admit that they still hoped Swaraj would come some day, and that they believed that it would bring with it lower rents, lower prices, and less oppression. They told me, too, that they would be glad to have Indian officers instead of Englishmen. They thought the Indians would be better able to understand them and more ready to sympathise with their complaints. I fear they have come to distrust Europeans, regarding them as the friends of the Talukdars.

So much for the tenants and the small townfolk. But what of the chamars? The chamars are not yet fully awake, but I talked to one of the very few chamars who know English. He is trying to rouse and organise his castemen, and, from what he said to me, I judge that in the United Provinces, as in Madras, the untouchable will choose to ask protection and assistance from the British Raj, rather than to trust himself to the tender mercies of the higher castes. In fact, the chamar made his first entry into politics by breaking an attempt to boycott the Prince of Wales's visit to the United Provinces.

At the other end of the scale the Talukdar is another trustworthy supporter of the British Raj. He is a little sore about the recent tenancy legislation, but Sir Harcourt Butler made large concessions to meet his view, and he had pretty well made up his mind that he can expect no quarter from his rival, the educated Indian of the town.

The attitude of the smaller zamindars is somewhat different from that of the Talukdar. During the height of the Non-Co-operation agitation they were sitting on the fence and considering whether they would not be wise to make terms with the Non-Co-operators. They have less to lose than the Talukdars, and they are more closely in contact with the current of popular feeling. They will become good Nationalists some day, if they are not that already.

Now look at the educated men in the towns. The majority of them are Moderates, as the voting at the University election showed. The Moderates, as I have said, approved the Government's decision to strike at Non-Co-operation when it became a manifest danger to the reign of law and order. But they did not approve of the way the blows were delivered. As in the Punjab, so also in the United Provinces there survive many old-school officials accustomed to deal with the simple illiterate villager and not very ready to adopt new methods out of consideration for the feelings of the literate townsmen. The Non-Co-operators were, of course, anxious to be martyred, but sensible men, Europeans as well as Indians, have told me that some officers showed a great deal more zeal than discretion in the business of handing out martyrs' crowns. Thousands went

to gaol. Most of them are out now, and no doubt many of them have made up their minds not to go back there in a hurry. But that does not mean that they have learnt to love our Raj.

The net result of the wholesale arrests is that the Non-Co-operators are crippled but embittered, while the Moderates have been profoundly shocked and are turned more than ever against the bureaucracy. In spite of that, the average Moderate of the United Provinces feels distinctly less confidence than the Moderate of Bombay in the ability of the country to govern itself. I was surprised to find how many men fought shy of the idea of giving the Provincial Legislature complete control of the provincial government. Others would not agree even to the immediate stopping of recruitment in England for the Civil Service and the police. Even when I pointed out that the effect of this measure could not be felt for ten years they still maintained that 50 per cent. of these services should continue to be recruited in Europe at least for some years to come. An Indian with great educational experience told me that he would not consent to the stopping of recruitment in England unless the Indians selected were sent for two years' training in Europe. "The truth was the code of honour of men turned out from Indian universities was still in some important respects inferior to the code recognised by the average graduate from an English university. The difference was nothing like so great as it used to be, but it was still very appreciable." Another man of good intelligence and status objected to the transfer of the police to the control of the Legislative Council for the interesting reason that the police are at present too bad. "If

the Legislative Council got control there is no saying what it might not do with them."

In the United Provinces I had the luck to meet a large number of Indian officials. They are mostly good Nationalists of the Moderate persuasion. Being officials they are more than a little contemptuous of the ignorance of the non-official, and they doubt the wisdom of increasing the powers of the Legislative Council. They are strong on the need for an improvement in the European's attitude and for the abolition of racial distinctions, but they are not so ready to Indianise the services as I had expected. They would, of course, go a considerable distance in that direction, but they dislike the idea of stopping all recruitment from England. They see the value of an infusion of foreign blood, and they appreciate the great work done by the I.C.S. in setting a high standard of official integrity and devotion to duty. The financial argument for Indianisation does not appeal to them. They fear, with some reason, that an Indian Legislative Council will never recognise the wisdom of paying high salaries.

There are also other considerations which tend to make the Moderate of the U.P. a little nervous about immediate Swaraj. He has seen how easily the illiterate and excitable masses can be stirred up by reckless and unscrupulous men. He realises that the percentage of educated property-owners is still alarmingly small. He fears that the Talukdar might prove unexpectedly powerful, and he knows that the Mohammedan would certainly remember the Mohammedan Empire that once had Agra for its capital. These things incline the average Moderate to pause.

But as in other provinces, so in the United Provinces

the best and ablest of the Moderates are anxious to go forward far and fast. And here, too, while you may find very honest and intelligent men among the Moderates, you will find as good or better among the Non-Co-operators.



## XLVII

### THE REFORMS IN THE UNITED PROVINCES

ALLAHABAD, *October 29.*

THE first election under the reforms in the United Provinces returned a Council in which the Moderates, who represent the educated Indian of the towns, were barely equal in strength to the landed interests led by the Talukdars. The Governor, Sir Harcourt Butler, nominated the Rajah of Mamudabad, a wealthy Mohammedan Talukdar, as his Indian Executive Councillor to share the charge of the reserved subjects with an English Civil servant. For his Ministers he chose two Moderates—C. Y. Chintamani and Pandit Jagat Narayan. The personalities are interesting. Sir Harcourt Butler is admitted by all to be exceedingly clever and entirely free from racial prejudice. But the Moderates suspect him of aristocratic leanings and regard him as being too much the friend of the Talukdars. The Europeans are inclined to distrust a man who is so very much cleverer than his fellow-countrymen. The Talukdars, however, will hear nothing against him.

The Rajah of Mamudabad is a Mohammedan and a Talukdar. He is also a Nationalist, one of the seventeen who signed a famous Nationalist manifesto in the days before Dyarchy had been heard of. Though he is reputed to be a man of fair education

and abilities, it is said that his experience is hardly sufficient to fit him for the difficult position he holds. That position is all the more difficult because of the very qualifications which led to his nomination. He is distrusted by the Moderates because he is a Talukdar; the Talukdars eye him with some suspicion because he is a Nationalist; Khilafatist Mohammedans denounce him because he has associated himself with the British Government. The fact that he is a personal friend of Sir Harcourt Butler brings him influence and enemies.

Of the Ministers, Pandit Jagat Narayan is a typical criminal lawyer, one who has contrived to combine success at the Bar with a high reputation for straightforwardness and good intentions. C. Y. Chintamani was born in a backward district of the Madras Presidency, went to Madras to seek his fortune, learnt the trade of journalism there, came to the United Provinces to better his prospects, made his name and founded and built up the *Leader*, the best Moderate newspaper in India. When you meet him you are struck by his energy and bluntness, and his honesty and ability are everywhere acknowledged. He probably commands more respect than any other Minister in India.

For the first year of the Reformed era Sir Harcourt Butler succeeded in driving this mixed team with extraordinary success. The important Tenancy Act was safely passed, and last year one of the Ministers publicly professed his satisfaction with the way the reforms were being worked in the United Provinces. It is no secret that neither of the Ministers would repeat that profession to-day. The machine is now jarring audibly. Moderates ascribe the change to a

stiffening in the attitude of the Services which became perceptible from the day of Mr. Montagu's resignation. The true cause, I think, lay in differences of opinion in regard to the repressive policy and the measure of protection which should be extended to officers who acted indiscreetly in giving effect to that policy.

Once antagonism is aroused Ministers may easily find much that is galling in their relations with the Imperial Services and the Governor. They begin to remember that the Services are in fact subordinate not to the local Government but to the Secretary of State. A correction or remonstrance which they would regard as courageous honesty if it came from a subordinate sounds like impertinence in the mouth of an officer who looks elsewhere for promotion and protection. The Governor is bound to champion the legitimate claims of the Services. But it is easy for men to differ on the question whether a particular claim is legitimate. The Minister may have no responsibility for the policy pursued in dealing with the reserved subjects, but he cannot but feel slighted if his advice is either not asked or ignored when decisions of great political importance have to be taken.

The boot would be on the other leg if the Minister had a really strong and vigorous majority behind him in the Council. The Minister would then be at his ease, though the Services might feel the pinch. But in the Council of the United Provinces the Ministers cannot rely on a majority.

So to-day, it is said, the Ministers would be glad of any decent excuse for resigning. The excuse is likely to present itself very soon. They are bringing

before the Council a bill to liberalise the District Boards and to increase their powers. The bill gives the Boards authority to levy a small land cess, part of which will fall on the Talukdar. Moderates say that the Talukdars mean to exert themselves to their utmost to defeat the bill, not because they object to the cess, but because they have decided to seize this opportunity to turn out the Liberal Ministers. For Sir Harcourt Butler is now going to Burma and Sir William Marris succeeds, and the Talukdars doubt whether they will find in him as staunch a friend as Sir Harcourt has proved himself. They think it is wise to get their own men into office, hoping thereby to prevent the Liberals from acquiring too much influence with the incoming Governor. Perhaps they will succeed.<sup>1</sup> But in any case a new election is due a year hence. What will happen then?

In the United Provinces, as in other provinces, I find it generally assumed that the Non-Co-operators will stand and vote at the next election. It is expected that they will carry most of the town constituencies in the United Provinces, but Moderates believe that strong candidates with local influence will be able to hold many of the rural seats in the Moderate interests. What will happen in the Talukdari areas in Oudh? I hear different opinions. The Talukdar will use his utmost efforts to bring his tenantry to the poll, and the Talukdar is certainly in a position to exercise considerable influence over the votes of illiterate tenants. But so is the Non-Co-operator. I asked

<sup>1</sup> The Talukdars abstained from pushing things to an extremity and accepted a compromise. But the Ministers have since resigned over a question connected with their relations with the Governor and their control over European Government servants.

one group of villagers, illiterate but rather "advanced" men by Oudh standards, whom they were going to vote for at the next election. "We will vote for the man who promises us most," was the reply. At that rate the Non-Co-operator should win.

## XLVIII

### REPRESSION IN PRACTICE

ALLAHABAD, *October 29.*

**T**HERE is always, of course, a great deal that is unfair and exaggerated in the Indian's invectives against the Government's "repressive action." Many of the "victims of repression" are silly asses or conceited asses who don't deserve much sympathy. Still, whenever British policy makes it necessary to apply repression on a large scale ugly things are sure to happen, and there is not much use in laying the blame on the particular officer who is immediately responsible. Let me tell two stories, just to show that the Moderates should be excused if they find a difficulty in digesting all that the Government ask them to swallow.

In one of the towns of the U.P. I met by chance a pleasant-looking, white-haired old man, one of the few lawyers who have given up their practice at Mr. Gandhi's call. The sacrifice was not so great for him as it would have been for a younger man. All the same, it must have been considerable, for he was still in his vigour, and I do not think he had saved much money. I found him intelligent and reasonable and quite free from bitterness. He was the first man I had met who professed himself to be in favour of separation from the Empire in theory. But he added that he did not consider the difference between

Dominion Home Rule and independence to be worth quarrelling about in practice, and, in fact, he was prepared to wait even for Dominion Home Rule if only he could feel confidence in Britain's good intentions. While we were talking he referred casually to the fact that he had spent six months of the year in prison, and before I went away I asked him what had taken him there. Here is his story. I am sure it is true in the main, though I may not have got all the details quite accurately.

He had summoned a Non-Co-operation meeting for a certain date. The police warned him not to hold it. He would probably have tried to hold the meeting in spite of the police, but just then came the news of the Chauri Chaura outbreak, so he cancelled the notices for the meeting. None the less a crowd gathered at the appointed time and place, and the police started to disperse it with lathis. He went out, meaning to persuade the people to go home. A European police officer was using his stick on the crowd when a Mohammedan stepped forward, bared his breast, and called out, "Look, why don't you shoot me?" The police officer struck him, and tried to drive him away, but the Mohammedan held his ground and remained passive under a shower of blows. At this sight the temper of the crowd began to get dangerous, and the old lawyer, fearing another Chauri Chaura, rushed up to the police officer calling out, "For God's sake don't stand there beating him. Let him alone or have him arrested and taken away." The police officer, seeing a man running up at him in an excited state, hit him over the head with his stick without stopping to inquire who he was or what he was saying. His subordinates then arrested the old

man and led him off. Being a Non-Co-operator he made no defence. The magistrate gave him six months' hard labour for obstructing the police in the discharge of their duty. This is not a "political" offence, and he did three months' hard labour before anyone had the sense to treat him as a political prisoner. A loyalist Mohammedan subsequently told me that he knew this man to be a sincere follower of Mr. Gandhi, about the best man in the town. That was the impression I got of him myself.

From this lawyer I got an introduction to a friend of his, a petty contractor. This man told me he had been an active Non-Co-operator and a local Congress official till the news of Chauri Chaura came. Then he resigned office. I could not make out whether he did this because he was afraid of getting into trouble or because the news convinced him that Non-Co-operation was a mistake. A little of both, I think. But though he resigned his secretaryship, he retained the spirit of independence. A little later a small army contract was put up to auction. He attended the auction. It happened that he was wearing a Gandhi cap. Almost everybody does in the U.P., but the British non-commissioned officer who was conducting the auction chose to take offence. He ordered him off the premises, using insulting language, and threatening to beat him. My friend stood up to him and answered him back. He told him he had ceased to be a Non-Co-operator, and so would fight him first and have the law of him afterwards. Here I interrupted to ascertain whether he had ever heard of a certain Dr. Johnson. He had not, and he went on to tell how the other bidders took his part, boycotted the auction, and went off with



him to the magistrate to file a complaint. After the complaint had been filed an apology was received, and my friend withdrew his case. The following week he was shown a circular, freshly issued by the magistrate's superior, asking all local military authorities to abstain from giving him any more contracts, as he was a dangerous Non-Co-operator. The man who showed him this circular was a British army captain. He showed him at the same time the reply he was sending. It ran thus :—

“ DEAR —, If X has committed any offence you should prosecute him. Meanwhile, he is a satisfactory contractor and I am going to give him my contracts as before.—Yours truly,

—”

I said I was glad to hear he had come across a British officer with some decency and common sense. He replied, “ When there are no more English officers like that I will again become a Non-Co-operator.”

## XLIX

### FLOODS IN BENGAL

SANTAHAR, *November 10.*

NORTHERN Bengal is in the Ganges delta, low-lying rice land intersected by river channels and traversed by railway embankments which run athwart the natural lines of drainage. There was a very heavy rainfall from September 25 to 27 and the waters rose to an unprecedented height, submerging the cultivated lands and topping and finally breaching the railway embankments. The area affected was about 2,000 square miles of country, with a population of over a million. Mercifully the loss of human life was comparatively small. Not more than sixty people were drowned, but throughout 700 square miles of a thickly populated countryside more than half the houses collapsed, all the fodder was ruined, and at least 12,000 head of cattle perished. Further, the main crop was utterly, or all but utterly, destroyed over an extent of 500 square miles. The losses in the rest of the affected tract were less serious, but by no means negligible.

When this calamity occurred the Government were well above flood level, in the hills at Darjeeling. (They are still there, by the way.) The early reports seem to have given them no conception of the gravity of the situation. They were slow to move, and when at last they began to take action the action

taken was inadequate, and what they gave was given ungraciously, reluctantly, and under pressure of public opinion. That at least was the impression left on the minds of the general public of Bengal.

In these circumstances a professor of chemistry, Sir P. C. Ray, stepped forward and called upon his countrymen to make good the Government's omissions. His call was answered with enthusiasm. The public of Bengal in one month contributed three lakhs of rupees, rich women giving their silks and ornaments, and the poor giving their spare garments. Hundreds of young men volunteered to go down and carry out the distribution of relief to the villagers, a task which involved a considerable amount of hard work and bodily discomfort in a malarious country.

What greatly aggravated the public's dissatisfaction with Government's attitude was the fact that the disaster is generally attributed to the faulty design of the railways, which is believed to make very inadequate provision for the passage of flood water. There is much evidence to support this view, but it was only after a lapse of a month and a half that Government promised an inquiry into the question.

The enthusiasm of the response to Sir P. C. Ray's appeal was due partly to the Bengali's natural desire to score off the foreign Government, partly to genuine public sympathy with the sufferers, and very largely to Sir P. C. Ray's remarkable personality and position. Sir P. C. Ray is a scientist of repute. I do not think he can be said to be an orthodox Non-Co-operator, but he is a very strong Nationalist, and a very strong critic of Government. He is also a real organiser and a real teacher. It was he who made the Calcutta College of Science. I heard a European saying, "If

Mr. Gandhi had only been able to create two more Sir P. C. Rays he would have succeeded in getting Swaraj within his year." A Bengali student told me, "If any Government officer or any of the Non-Co-operating politicians had called for subscriptions the public would not have given even three farthings. But when Sir P. C. Ray calls everyone knows that the money will be spent and well spent, and not wasted."

When I reached the affected villages a month and a half had elapsed since the flood. The waters had subsided, but the extent of the damage done was still very obvious, and the various relief agencies were hard at work. Far the largest and most business-like looking agency was Sir P. C. Ray's Bengal Relief Committee. This is not a political organisation, but I did not find any one among its up-country workers who was not a Non-Co-operator.

In charge of its relief operations was a young Bengali who passed into the Indian Civil Service a couple of years back, became a convert to Non-Co-operation, threw up his appointment, and has since been in training for politics. Under him were a couple of hundred volunteer workers, mostly between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five. A few were clerks in merchants' offices whose employers had granted them leave to enable them to take up the work. There were also doctors for the medical work, but the great majority were regular Congress propagandists and organisers, many of them boys who had left Government schools and colleges at Mr. Gandhi's call. Among them I found a young Non-Co-operating Indian Christian and a young Hindu who had been interned on suspicion of

complicity with the pre-war terrorist conspiracy. These two were both men of some ability occupying positions of trust.

Altogether the organisation looked pretty good, and the spirit of the volunteers was excellent. The men really do go into the villages, see things for themselves, and make detailed inquiries regarding losses from the villagers on the spot. Then they either bring the villagers what they need or give the villagers written orders authorising them to draw what they need from conveniently situated centres. Much food, medicine, and clothing have thus been distributed to the villagers, and a beginning is being made with the distribution of house-building material and cattle fodder. Other minor volunteer relief agencies are also at work, and the Government have done and are doing a good deal. But my inquiries on the spot suggested that there was some justification for the popular complaint regarding Government's attitude, and they made it quite clear that Government have lost immensely in prestige over the whole affair, and that Non-Co-operation has won what Government have lost, thanks to the fine work of Sir P. C. Ray's volunteers.

I met a stationmaster who had been living with his wife and newly-born child at a country railway station. With the first rise of the waters his wife was driven out of her quarters and compelled to take refuge in the ticket office. This refuge she shared with four snakes. The stationmaster counted twenty snakes on a little tree that grew on the platform just outside his window. All the snakes in the country had been flooded out of their holes and were seeking refuge, like the men, on any dry ground that showed

above the flood. A further rise of the waters warned the stationmaster that it was time to go up higher. He crossed the line to the goods shed, piled up sacks of tobacco and rice as high as he could get them to go, and took refuge on top of this platform with his wife and child. That was at 1 p.m. At 8 p.m. the water had reached them and was still rising, and they gave up hope. At 10 p.m. the child died, and thereafter the waters began to fall. If that was the experience of a stationmaster living in a solid masonry building, what sort of a night did the villagers pass, with their mud huts crumbling and collapsing as soon as the waters rose above the floor? Many of them took to the trees and spent two or three days without food before they could be taken off in boats. I heard of a small local landholder who had been doing rescue work on his own in a boat. The second day after the flood had reached its height he found one house still standing, and in it two hens, a jackal, a hare, and two men, not to mention the usual snakes.

One member of Government took occasion the other day to enunciate the proposition that Government is not a charitable institution. If he had been round seeing the effects of the flood for himself and hearing the experiences of the sufferers, he would have waited for a more suitable moment at which to give expression to this thought.

The fact is the Government were over-cautious when it was the moment to be generous, even lavish. The villagers had lost most of their annual income and a great proportion of their small stock or capital, and they had been frightened almost out of their wits. They badly needed someone to come round and put heart into them, to assure them of sympathy

and of the help they needed to set them on their legs again. The local officers did what they could, but the Government did not give them the money or the promises they needed to reassure the cultivator. They left it to the Bengal Relief Committee to do this, and the Non-Co-operators will reap, and will deserve to reap, the fruits of the good seed sown by Sir C. P. Ray's volunteers. All the local officers tell me that the volunteers have won the gratitude of the villagers, and that the villagers will follow their lead at the next election. I visited one of the minor relief centres with a Government officer. The villagers there told us plainly that "Gandhi Maharaj" (no longer "Mahatma Gandhi," but now "Gandhi Maharaj") and his followers had saved the countryside, that they would vote for Gandhi Maharaj at the next election, that they would like to replace the European officers by Indian officers who would understand them and have sympathy with them like Gandhi's volunteers, and that they prayed that Swaraj would come soon to make them happy. I spent two other mornings in the villages, one day in company with a Non-Co-operating volunteer and the other day with an experienced Indian Government official. Everywhere I got the same impression. If the villagers had doubts before, they have made up their minds now. The Non-Co-operators, they believe, are their real friends, and not the Government officers. The Government officers themselves confessed sadly that this is now the prevalent opinion in the Bengal villages.

I was the more impressed because the villages I saw were not "politically advanced" villages. This is a backward tract, and the villagers were poor,

ill-educated, simple-minded, and timid folk, mostly Mohammedans.

I said that Non-Co-operation had won a first-class victory in the Punjab over the Guru ka Bagh affair. Here in Bengal, through this relief work, it has won another victory which is less striking but far more honourable.



## L

### BENGAL MOHAMMEDANS AND THE KHILAFAT

DACCA, *December 18.*

I HAVE been spending a fortnight in trying to find out what the Mohammedans of Eastern Bengal make of Angora's dealings with the Sultan and the Khilafat. The typical Mohammedan contends, first, that the news is all another lie of Reuter's; secondly, that if the news is true it is good news—the Turks have as usual done the right thing; thirdly, that if anything has been done contrary to Mohammedan law the Ulemas will trace it out and get the Turks to set it right.

From which it seems safe to conclude that the news came as a pretty severe shock to the Mohammedans here. The shock set the Western-educated Mohammedans thinking and made them realise that what they really cared for was not so much the Khilafat as the preservation of a strong and independent Mohammedan Power capable of championing Mohammedan interests in all parts of the world. If the Western-educated Mohammedans could have their way they would declare the readiness of the Mohammedan world to back Kemal in doing whatever seems good to him with the Khilafat in order to adapt it to the needs of the present day. But the Western-educated Mohammedan politician knows that he must carry with him the Eastern-educated Mohammedan theologian, for it is only the latter who can influence

the illiterate masses. The theologian feels himself bound by the Mohammedan law, and he requires to be satisfied that the proceedings of the Turks are in strict accord with law and precedent. The politician has no difficulty in showing him that there is nothing new or objectionable about the deposition of the Khalif or the election of a successor. But the proposal to deprive the Khalif of his temporal powers is a very serious stumbling-block. For the last three years Indian Mohammedans have been proclaiming that the position of the Khalif is essentially different from that of the Pope, in that temporal power is an inseparable attribute of the Khilafat. How, then, can Mohammedans allow the Turks to deprive the Khilafat of this inseparable attribute? Most of the educated Mohammedans whom I have seen hope to solve the difficulty in the following way—if only the Turks will have the grace to accept their suggestion. Mohammedan tradition, they contend, shows the early Khalifs to have been constitutional rulers who never acted against the advice of their chief followers. So now let the Khalif once again be put in the position of a constitutional ruler. All temporal orders must issue in his name, but his Ministers may frame and be responsible for the orders. There will thus be a reversion to the primitive model of Mohammedan government, such as existed before the later Khalifs made the Khilafat hereditary and despotic. That is the view which the Western-educated Mohammedan is trying to press on his theological brother. It is not yet clear that the latter will find himself able to accept it. He is still hard at work anxiously searching his scriptures.

The above is the result of my own inquiries among

the English-speaking Mohammedans of Eastern Bengal. It agrees pretty well with what I learnt from an Englishman who has vernacular-speaking friends in a bazaar. The other day he was paying a call on a Mohammedan friend whose reputation for sanctity stands so high that he has only to blow upon a glass of water and it turns into medicine. In the course of conversation the subject of the Khilafat came up. The holy man expressed himself doubtful of Reuter's trustworthiness, but added that there could be no objection to the deposition of the Khalif and the election of a successor. He could not believe that the Turks intended to deprive the Khilafat of its temporal powers. In any case an assembly of Ulemas must soon meet to decide whether anything unlawful had been done and to correct anything that stood in need of correction. While he was still on this subject there entered a Mohammedan from the Punjab, an educated politician. He plunged into the discussion at once. He was ready with texts to show that the Khalif Omar always accepted and acted on the advice of his followers, and with the help of these texts he sought to secure the holy man's assent to the proposition that the first four Khalifs were only figureheads propelled from behind. The holy man hedged a little, and a third person came in, a graduate of Aligarh University. This man created a diversion by explaining to my English friend that the Turkish armies had been in possession of Constantinople for the last six weeks, having crossed the Straits after defeating the British in Asia Minor. The British were now confined to their Embassy in Constantinople. The news had been suppressed by Reuter but had reached India some time ago overland.

This Mohammedan graduate really believed that the facts were as he stated them.

His story reminded my friend of an incident that happened about the end of September. While he was sitting talking on the verandah of a Mohammedan in the bazaar a man came running by shouting "Victory, victory." My friend asked what was the news. He was told that a report had just come of a great Turkish victory and that it could be read at all the Khilafat offices. The Turks had defeated the British in Asia Minor, crossed the Straits in four places under cover of the night, and captured Constantinople. A wealth of detail was given, and the whole story was swallowed at a gulp by the Mohammedans who were listening.

This excessive credulity in regard to bazaar rumours is everywhere combined with an exaggerated distrust of Reuter's news. Only two days ago a Mohammedan member of the Legislative Council told me that it was now clear that there was no truth in Reuter's report about the Khalif having taken refuge on a British warship. He thought that Reuter might at least have had the grace to publish an apology for the mistake!

Indeed the name "Reuter" is now almost as effective as the name "Lloyd George" in drawing an outburst of blasphemy from the lips of any Mohammedan who hears it. There are other symptoms too which show that the Mohammedan temper is still very inflammable. Now that Turkey seems sure of attaining her ends in Asia Minor and Thrace more attention is being paid to our position in Mesopotamia, which is inconsistent, so it is contended, with the independence of Arabia.

If even the Bengali Mohammedan still has his bristles up, it is probable that the Mohammedan in other parts of India is in a much more dangerous frame of mind. For the Bengali Mohammedans are the descendants of converted Hindus. An overwhelming majority of them are poor and ignorant. There are few old families, and few rich or influential men among them. Unlike the Mohammedans in other parts of India they use the local vernacular and not Urdu as their house language, and they are therefore less exposed to the influence of the Pan-Islamic spirit.

Before I came to Bengal I had been told that for this reason the Hindu Mohammedan difficulty was less serious or even non-existent in Bengal, though the Mohammedans are in a majority. At first I was inclined to believe that this was the fact, but further inquiries among the Mohammedans compelled me to modify my opinion. The difficulty may for the present be less acutely felt. The Mohammedan here has less of the martial tradition. No one would say here, as a Hindu politician said to me in the U.P., that twenty Mohammedan villagers would terrorise 200 Hindus. But for all that the difficulty is there, the rivalry between two separate communities which must always live side by side without ever coalescing. And with the spread of education among the Mohammedans the difficulty threatens to become more formidable as the competition for wealth and power grows more intense. In Bengal, as elsewhere, it is clear that if once the Mohammedans were satisfied that Great Britain means to be neither the enemy nor the master but the friend of the Mohammedan world, their zeal for Swaraj would cool down to somewhere

near freezing-point. That is the fact, whether we like it or not. An awkward corollary is that we can't afford to disregard Mohammedan opinion, be it reasonable or unreasonable, so long as we wish to retain our hold on India.

## LI

### BENGAL

CALCUTTA, *December 24.*

**M**Y time in Bengal was short, and I could only get a very superficial view of the province. I regret this the more because the Bengali claims that Bengal has gone farther than any other province in India in developing a distinctive culture of its own, and I have heard the justice of this claim conceded in other provinces. Thus a Mohammedan in the United Provinces said to me : " Bengal is the only part of India where you will find true local patriotism. The Mohammedan in Bengal speaks Bengali. The emigrant Bengali brings up his children to speak Bengali and keeps up his connection with his homeland. The Bengali has his own school of painting, of music, and of literature. In fact, Bengal is the only truly civilised province in India, and the Bengalis are beginning to feel themselves a nation." A Tamil from Madras went some way to making the same admission, but with reservations in favour of his own Tamil Nadu. " The Tamils," said he, " and the Bengalis lead the rest of India in the fine arts, music, literature, and cooking. Between Bengali music and Tamil music there is not much to choose. In literature Bengal, it must be admitted, has, for the moment, shot ahead. But the dry, pungent Tamil cookery conducts us to a distinctly

higher plane of æsthetic values than has ever been reached by the cloying and somewhat greasy sweetness of the Bengal school." Another Tamil, an educationalist, while ridiculing the care which the Bengali bestows on secreting his womenfolk, was at the same time willing to admit that Rabindranath Tagore's Bolpur is the only educational institution in India where the atmosphere is at once national and desirable.

There is no doubt that the Bengali is proud of his country. I had not been twenty-four hours in Bengal before I heard both the Bengali's favourite battle-cries : " Calcutta is Asia," and " What Bengal thinks to-day the rest of India will think to-morrow." A half-educated Bengali clerk gave me a list of all the Bengalis who have got "firsts" at English universities, and boldly claimed that the Bengali is the most intellectual of all the races on the face of this earth. A little later on, when I was questioning some villagers about their willingness to see European officers replaced by Indians, I noticed that my interpreter always substituted "Bengalis" for "Indians" in translating. Certainly Bengal has begun to think of itself as a nation, and no common nation at that.

If you judge by faces you will be apt to accept the Bengali's opinion in this matter. The Bengali type is very distinctive, and it makes a very favourable impression on the stranger. Even in the villages, where the physique is poor, you see very intelligent faces. And in the towns—well, what you see is simply too good to be true. Look at that white-bearded, spectacled fat old Bengali. No man could really be quite so intelligent or quite so benevolent as he appears. You begin to suspect an imposture.

And the foreign residents will tell you there is an



imposture. You know that a good deal has been written to the discredit of the Bengali, and when you get to Bengal you will find not only the European but also the immigrant Indian from other provinces very emphatic in warning you that Bengali claims must not be taken at their face value. "Unstable as water, he cannot be counted on," is the charge. The evidence in support of the charge is too strong to be neglected. It comes from many witnesses who are by no means unfriendly. Still, I fancy that for a variety of reasons the present tendency in India is to put too low a value on the Bengali. There is something more than examination ability in a race that can show among its living representatives Rabin-dranath Tagore, Jagadis Chandra Bose, P. C. Ray, Bepin Chandra Pal, Arabindo Ghose, and Sir Ashutosh Mukerji—not to speak of the ordinary crew of capable politicians. Besides that, while touring over the North of India I was much struck by the position which emigrant Bengalis have won for themselves in other provinces. I had expected to find them mere clerks, unpopular and despised. I found them popular and much respected as doctors, newspaper editors, and heads of colleges, and some of them have learnt to work with their hands. I was talking to a young English mechanic who was in charge of some military motor repair works near the North-West Frontier. After complaining about the slackness and carelessness of the average Indian workman, he added: "But I have four young college-educated Bengalis. They are quite different. I don't have to worry about them. They don't know as much about engines as I do, for I was with Rolls-Royce during the war. All the same, there's not so much they don't know,

and when they don't know a thing they come to me and ask, and they're mighty quick in picking up what's told them. And they're thorough, too. They take a pride in their job. It would break their hearts if anything went wrong with an engine they had passed. It only happened once, and that time the fellow sat down and cried, though it wasn't his fault after all. That's the sort they are. A bit too sensitive, but pretty good."

Now you can see the elements of the problem of Bengal. A very intelligent people with a good conceit of itself, very sensitive, and very emotional. A large middle-class ambitious to enter one or other of the genteel professions—i.e. Government service, the law, medicine, and teaching. Hopeless overcrowding in the colleges of the University, which are looked on as the avenues to these professions: 18,000 students sought to qualify themselves for entry into the colleges this year, and 16,000 were successful, but the colleges are not capable of accommodating anything like this number. The old prejudice against the technical professions which entail rough work is disappearing, but facilities for technical training are utterly inadequate. The net result is an enormous number of unemployed young men who have received that kind of a literary education which is the natural product of excessively large classes and an excessive desire to pass an examination. These young men are acutely conscious of the reproaches that have been so often levelled at the Bengali—that they have always been a subject race and that they are lacking in moral and physical courage. A young Bengali told me that when the Bengali regiment was raised his mother had laughed at the idea of a Bengali

handling arms. "To get rid of that tradition we must have a militia and conscription. It is all very well for you in Europe to talk about disarmament, but we Bengalis must first learn to bear arms." I dared not ask him whether he also thought it necessary to get up a little war with, say, the Gurkhas on the Nepalese frontier, who would, no doubt, be ready to oblige. As a matter of fact, he was a very sane and a very sincere man, and there is perhaps more sense than we think in what he said. He knows his own people best.

Whether his prescription is wise or unwise there are plenty of young Bengalis who have faith in it. It was this desire to break an old tradition and to wipe out an old disgrace that led some of the best of the Bengal students into the terrorist campaign that gave so much trouble before the war. The danger of a recrudescence of this movement is very obvious. Indeed, when one considers the extraordinary intelligence and sensitiveness of the Bengali and the apparently unlimited number of unemployed young men, one's first idea is that it is impossible to postpone an explosion for more than a couple of years or so. But experienced men say that, even if the wisdom and patience of the Bengali leaders were to fail, the weak points of the Bengali would still be there to save the situation. Perhaps they are right. I am not sure. In talking to a young Bengali of a very good type I told him that from what I had seen I had come round to the opinion that there was not likely to be any serious attempt at revolution in India during the eight years that have still to run before the Montagu scheme comes up for overhauling. He was very certain that I was wrong and that the

patience of the country would never last for eight years.

Well, the educated class can't make a revolution without the assistance either of the army or of the villagers. There is no army in Bengal. What about the Bengali villager ?

In the villages, above the cultivating ryots and below the big landlords, who spend most of their time in the towns, you find a class of small landlords or intermediate tenure holders, gentlemen of small income but large leisure. Their sons get a literary education and seek employment in the towns. From time to time they revisit the village and assist in the political education of their neighbours. Below them is the ryot who cultivates a very small holding of very fertile land. He is not so rich as the ryot in the Punjab nor so poor as the cultivator in Oudh or the Deccan. He, too, like his landlord, has plenty of time to spare for politics and other recreations, as his crops, rice and jute, do not require, or at least do not receive, continuous attention. If he had a mind to do so he could take up the production of khaddar. I understand that he has made a good resolution to begin to spin in earnest next year. This year he prefers to pass his time thinking, conversing, marketing, and fishing.

The villages which I saw were neither the most advanced nor the most backward in Bengal. It was clear that the idea of Swaraj had reached the cultivators, though only in the usual vague form. "We are less happy than our fathers were. That, we hear, is the fault of the foreign Government. We hear, too, that Swaraj is going to come and make us happy. Now we feel that life is every day growing more

difficult. No doubt our own people will be better able to understand our difficulties than these foreigners who cannot even understand our language. The sooner Swaraj comes the better. We are quite ready to help Gandhi Maharaj's people so far as we are able, for when they come to visit our village they speak and act as if they really wished us well."

I hear that in some districts the ryot's political education has progressed much farther. In fact, it has progressed too far for the convenience of the Non-Co-operator. From being critics of the Government the ryot has gone on to be critical of Non-Co-operation's promises. A Non-Co-operator told me that in one advanced district the ryot feels that he has already got Swaraj because he has lost all fear of the Government, and is confident that he knows how to overthrow it at any moment. But, having got this far, he is in no hurry to take the last step. He wants first to be satisfied that it would be to his advantage to do so.

That reminded me of what I heard from a young Mohammedan student who had been deputed to assist in preaching the gospel of Non-Co-operation in Tamil and Telugu villages in Madras. He was enthusiastic about the Telugus, but he did not like the Tamils at all. He said they were materialistic. They asked too many questions about the advantages of Swaraj. Now the Telugus are an emotional people not generally supposed to possess much stamina, though I hear that in Guntur they showed more toughness than was expected of them. But the Tamils are the sturdiest, the most independent, the most intelligent, or at least the most practically minded ryots in India. I told the boy that I was not much alarmed at hearing

that he had converted the Telugus, but that I would know that Swaraj was really coming when the Tamils began to march. He thought that Swaraj could not wait for the Tamils. He would be an old man before they stirred.

But Swaraj will have to wait for the army or for the ryot, as the politicians know very well. Only they think they can hustle the ryot and get him to come on board the revolutionary train without his asking too many questions about its destination. But if the more advanced Bengali ryot, like the Tamil, has begun to ask awkward questions, then it may take the educated class quite a time to satisfy him that revolution will really be to his advantage.

## LII

### CONGRESS POLITICS

INDIAN OCEAN, *December 3.*

MASS civil disobedience, which being interpreted means a general refusal to pay taxes, was originally designed to be the lance of Non-Co-operation. This lance was to inflict the fatal wound when the other items in the programme had disciplined the country till it could be trusted to give the requisite direction and driving force to the thrust. When Mr. Gandhi called off the "no land tax" campaign in Bardoli, that was taken to be a confession that the masses were not yet sufficiently disciplined to wield the weapon effectively. After Mr. Gandhi's arrest it became plain that a considerable interval must elapse before the country could again be induced to go into training for so desperate an enterprise.

"Since mass civil disobedience is not practical politics, is there any effective weapon that can be substituted therefor?" This question began to be asked all over India, and it soon divided the Non-Co-operators into two camps. In the one camp are the true Gandhiites, who have always regarded Non-Co-operation not so much as a political weapon but rather as an educational programme designed to give the country a training in self-reliance and self-control. These men see in the failure of mass civil disobedience

no more than a proof of the need for devoting more energy to the education of the masses through the constructive items of the programme—non-violence, the production of khaddar, the removal of untouchability, the establishment of Panchayat courts and national schools, the promotion of temperance, and the rest. They admit that it may take time to educate the country up to the point at which it will be fit to resume mass civil disobedience. But they are confident that sooner or later their methods will produce the desired result, and besides, they hold that till the country is ripe for mass civil disobedience it cannot be ripe for Swaraj. A change in Mr. Gandhi's programme is therefore in their opinion neither necessary nor even justifiable. In the same camp with these purists are a certain number of Hindus and many Mohammedans who believe in mass disobedience, civil or uncivil. They blame Mr. Gandhi for holding up the whole movement because of a few unpleasant incidents. They think their task is to work the country up to the pitch of mass disobedience and then to let go and "damn the consequences."

In the other camp are the men who have never looked on Non-Co-operation as anything more than a political weapon, while they think it essential for moral or political reasons to avoid any widespread outbreak of violence. These men doubt the educative value of the constructive programme, or rather they recognise that it is vain to expect that the population of India will submit to and finance so long, so tedious, and so costly an educational programme. Mass civil disobedience having been tried and found to be, at least for the present, impracticable, they turn to the alternative policy which the Mahrattas



favoured from the first. They wish to capture the councils and use the power the councils give to extort constitutional concessions from the Executive, co-operating when the Executive makes it worth their while, and obstructing when the Executive shows itself stiff-necked.

The impression I get from my inquiries up and down the country is that the majority of educated Hindu Non-Co-operators are inclining to this policy, though many are unwilling to advocate it openly, partly because it savours of disloyalty to Mr. Gandhi, partly because it is for that reason odious to the less educated and less experienced enthusiasts who are ready to howl down anyone guilty of disagreeing with their hero. But the majority of the Mohammedans are for staying outside the councils, being unwilling to take the oath of allegiance till a settlement has been made with Turkey.

Quite recently the report of the Civil Disobedience Committee was published for the consideration of the country. This Committee was appointed early in the year by the Non-Co-operating leaders nominally to ascertain whether the country was ripe for mass civil disobedience, but really to consider the question of entering the councils. The Committee was unanimous in finding that general mass civil disobedience is for the present out of the question. On the subject of entering the councils it was divided. Three members, led by Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar, a pure Gandhiite, were for continuing the boycott of the councils and concentrating on the "constructive programme." The other three, led by Pandit Motilal Nehru, a very intelligent lawyer, pronounced in favour of entering the councils, not to use them in

accordance with the Mahratta plan, but to wreck them. These three were at pains to lay down a hard-and-fast plan of action so as to make it apparently impossible to deviate from the policy of destroying the councils for the sake of accepting any compromise offered by the Government, however advantageous it might seem.

The other half of the Committee had no difficulty in showing that there was nothing to be said for this policy. In the first place, members entering the council to wreck it would be faced with the disagreeable necessity of taking an oath "faithfully to discharge their duties as members of the council." Secondly, Mr. Gandhi had once pronounced that to enter the councils to wreck them was not a good or an honest policy. Thirdly, it was doubtful whether the Non-Co-operators would succeed in wrecking the councils. Fourthly, even supposing the councils were wrecked, it was not clear that the country would be any the better or the Government any the worse for it.

Lastly, the evidence before the Committee revealed no popular support for such a proposal. Many witnesses wanted to stay out of the councils and many wanted to go into them and use them. But the number in favour of wrecking tactics was altogether insignificant. I may add that in the course of my own inquiries I did not meet more than three men who believed in wrecking the councils. It is also worth noting that this wrecking policy would drive the Moderates into a close alliance with the Government, while the Mahratta plan would certainly attract the largest and strongest section of the Moderates to support the Congress party.

None the less, Mr. C. R. Das has pronounced in favour of the wrecking plan. He is a lawyer of ability, the President-elect of the coming Congress, and the most influential Indian politician outside gaol walls. How comes it that men like him and Pandit Motilal Nehru unite in fathering this misbegotten policy? The man in the street, Co-operator or Non-Co-operator, will tell you: "They don't mean what they say. They intend to go into the councils and use them. The talk about wrecking is only to avoid a split. The Gandhiites could not yet bear the idea of going into the councils to use them—i.e. to co-operate. These people are trying to break them in to the idea gradually by first asking them to go into the councils to non-co-operate." It is difficult to believe that a man of Pandit Motilal Nehru's reputation could be guilty of such a mixture of folly and insincerity, and I cannot help thinking that there must be some other explanation and that the man in the street does him an injustice. Still, when he and Mr. Das undertook to explain away the council oath they certainly invited the suspicion which a layman is always apt to feel about lawyers.

Mr. Tilak taught, so I was told the other day by a vernacular journalist from a land of frequent floods, that the Indian nationalist uprising should be "as elusive as water and as irresistible." That is a fine saying, but it was used by lesser men to cover a lot of silly trickery, and Mr. Gandhi did a good and necessary work in ridding Indian politics of evasions and equivocations. It will be a pity if his disciples take advantage of his absence to start bringing them back. Whether the man in the street's suspicions are well grounded or not, the fact remains that when

the All-India Congress Committee met to consider the Civil Disobedience Committee's report, a resolution was put forward requiring Congressmen to participate in next year's council elections and leaving open for future decision the question of the action to be taken by the Congress candidates who were successful at the polls. This resolution was of course intended to allow the Mahratta party to vote with the adherents of Pandit Motilal Nehru, but the alliance was not strong enough to get the resolution passed. It was postponed and will come up again for consideration by the Subjects Committee of the All-India Congress which meets at the end of December. The general opinion, I find, is that the resolution will be turned down at this Congress, but that none the less the larger half of the Congress will somehow or other find an excuse for taking part in next year's elections.<sup>1</sup> The number of the pure Gandhiites is small and they will soon be deserted by their violent allies whether the latter begin to make mischief or find it impossible to do so. But small though the number of pure Gandhiites is, it seems likely that they will prove sufficiently resolute and sufficiently influential to prevent the Congress party from attaining that dominating position in the new councils which it might otherwise expect to occupy.

Outside the ranks of the Non-Co-operators there is one political force in the country which might yet upset all calculations. That is Dr. Annie Besant. Since the Reformed Constitution came into being she has worked to make it thrive and grow. Seeing

<sup>1</sup> The expected has happened. Congress turned down the resolution, but a special congress convened in September 1923 has given permission to enter the councils to those who desire to do so.

that India is too impatient to await the outcome of any slow process of evolution, she has now produced a scheme for obtaining immediate Swaraj through the agency of the councils. The scheme is attractive in that it provides for the drafting of an Indian Constitution by an Indian convention. But I doubt if Dr. Annie Besant's hour has yet returned. The country has not forgiven her for her courage in opposing Mr. Gandhi and championing the cause of law, order, and common sense. And, even if the country forgave her, I am not sure that the Indian political world could be persuaded or coerced into submitting itself a second time to be reigned over by that very autocratic queen. Still, she has grasped power in many incarnations, and it is just conceivable that there is one more glorious incarnation yet in store for her.

## LIII

### INDUSTRIAL INDIA

INDIAN OCEAN, *December 5.*

**T**HANKS to the kindness of a director and of the management, I got a passing glimpse of Tata's iron and steel works at Jamshedpur. The place gave me plenty to think about. Here is India industrialised under the most favourable circumstances. For the Jamshedpur iron and steel industry is not like the Bombay cotton industry, an industry that has sprung up by chance in the middle of a densely crowded city. Tata's started with a clean slate. Fifteen years ago there was no Jamshedpur, only a small agricultural village in the middle of a jungle. The site was well chosen, not only from an industrial but also from a sanitary point of view. The climate is healthy, though very hot in summer. There is unlimited room for extensions and house sites. Capital has been forthcoming, and Tata's have had no need to adopt a penny-wise-pound-foolish policy. So if industrialised India is ever going to be a success it should be a success at Jamshedpur.

What did I make of it all ? Well, to say the truth, when I first saw Tata's furnaces polluting the eastern sky at dawn I felt some difficulty in reconciling myself to the desecration. It happens that the scenery round Jamshedpur is typical Indian scenery of the

kind I like best—a country of low, rough red gravel ridges with ranges of blue hills in the distance, all under a wide, clear sky. Smoke in that sky was new to me, and I did not want it there. Still, a painter might have said that the smoke made the dawn more interesting. Anyhow, it was plain that the smoke had come to stay. So I accepted the fact and went off to see the town and the conditions under which Tata's men are living.

Jamshedpur has now a population of over 80,000. It exists only for Tata's. Tata's own the place. Every soul in it, you may say, is directly or indirectly working for Tata's or for one of the new subsidiary companies which are springing up in the neighbourhood under the shadow of Tata's wing. If there is a certain lack of variety in the interests and aims of a town of this description, this is compensated for by the striking diversity of the races to be found in it. Here are American, English, and Scotch technical experts who form Tata's management, not more than three or four Indians having yet gained a footing among the upper thirty. Even lower down you find a good deal of skilled white labour engaged on jobs for which special experience is required. But there are plenty of jobs, skilled and unskilled, left for Indians, and Jamshedpur draws recruits from every race and every class in India. Pathans and Sikhs come from the north to meet with Tamils from Cape Comorin. Illiterate aboriginal tribes are digging, road-making, and carrying headloads, while American-educated Bengalis are busy erecting dynamos or carrying on chemical investigations.

What I saw gave me the impression that there is no town in India where the worker lives in such

favourable conditions and where the pinch of poverty is so little felt. Housing is good, and so is the sanitation and the water supply. There is plenty of room and plenty of fresh air, and some attempt has been made to provide amusements. Hours are reasonable, judged by Indian standards. The wages paid are not extravagant, but they must be quite up to the level of the best wages paid elsewhere in India, even when allowance has been made for the difficulty of keeping down the prices in the bazaar of a rapidly growing industrial town situated in a barren and sparsely inhabited country. Above all, there is no unemployment or under-employment, for in spite of the slump the extensions planned have to be proceeded with, and new companies are erecting plant for subsidiary industries all around.

What I heard from others confirmed the favourable impression left on me by what I saw. Both at Jamshedpur and elsewhere I met labour leaders who were ready enough to criticise Tata's. But I noticed that their criticisms were either concerned with rather petty grievances or else they attacked the whole capitalist system.

Yet in spite of these favourable conditions, labour at Jamshedpur is no more contented than it is in the other industrial centres in India. There was a serious strike this year, and it is by no means certain that the trouble will not recur. What is the cause of this unrest? "The political agitator," is the answer which the employer usually gives to this question, and there is no doubt there is often a great deal of truth in the answer, though the employer is mistaken if he thinks that all "outside" labour leaders are guided by political motives. I have met labour



leaders in different parts of India, and I fancy the men I met were fairly typical. The majority were lawyers, journalists, professional politicians, or professional social workers. Few of them knew anything of industries either from the point of view of the workman or of the employer. Some had a genuine interest in the whole question of the relations of capital and labour. Others were frankly out for political ends. Except in a few special industries such as the printing trade and the railways, which include a considerable number of educated employees, Indian labour is unable to organise and officer trade unions without outside assistance. When educated men volunteer their services to help in the formation of a union, the workers are generally glad to accept the offer and apt to form an exaggerated opinion of the power which the union will be able to exercise. The educated president of such a union, if he is a theorist or an enthusiast, is very apt to excite false hopes which lead the men to disaster. Even if he is a cautious man he may find himself unable to restrain the men's impatience to test the strength of their new weapon by striking at an obviously inopportune moment or for an obviously unattainable purpose.

Remember that the Indian labourer is extraordinarily ill-educated, extraordinarily suspicious, and extraordinarily intelligent. He is much quicker than the British workman to take up any new idea which a theorist or an agitator may place before him. He is much slower to accept an explanation put forward by his employer to remove an ungrounded suspicion. But apart from the influence of politicians and intellectuals there are other factors which make it difficult to fit Indian labour into the Western indus-

trial system. The Indian is apt to feel that a man has a natural right to security of tenure. He tends to claim a permanent right, perhaps even an hereditary right, in his land and in his job. It seems to him the height of injustice to discharge or evict a man without reason assigned or simply because you can get a better or a cheaper man to fill the place. The Indian peasant has succeeded in establishing this permanent right in the land he cultivates. He cannot be evicted so long as he pays the rent, and, indeed, before the advent of the British Raj he would probably not have been evicted even then. The State or his landlord would have thought it quite natural to flog him, but to evict him or sell away his land was a British innovation, and an unpopular one. The caste system, of course, tends to support this claim to security of tenure and to extend it from the land to other occupations. I remember an over-sanguine milkman who sued for an injunction to restrain the occupant of a certain house from getting his milk from a rival milkman. The plaintiff admitted that he might be fined if the quality of the milk which he supplied was not satisfactory, but he contended that he had a permanent and hereditary right to supply milk to all the houses in that street. In the same way the factory worker is very ready to challenge the management's right to dismiss a man.

Since this is the traditional Indian view of a man's rights, it is not surprising to find that the ideas of the Guild Socialists have a strong attraction for the young Indian intellectuals who are interesting themselves in labour questions. These young men are all for abolishing "wage slavery" and introducing democratic self-government into industry. When I

suggest that their own position as labour leaders amounts to an admission of the fact that Indian labour is not yet able to run even a trade union and ask what reason there is to suppose that it would be capable of managing the whole industry, they reply that the present industrial system will take some time in dying. But the trouble is that in India the industrial system has hardly yet come into being. These men often talk as if they were out to cook the capitalist's goose before she has even begun to lay the golden eggs, and it does not appear that they have any rival bird in hand to substitute for her. Not many of them really expect much from the khaddar bird.

Again, the Indian workman is hardly less sensitive about his dignity than the educated Indian. At the same time he is tough enough. Having struck work, he will not come back in a hurry, and even when he sees that he is hopelessly beaten he will starve for another month unless the employer will consent to make some nominal concession to save his face.

Then there is the language difficulty. In most Indian industrial establishments the managing staff is still European. Slack as the European Government official is about learning the vernacular, the European industrialist is ten times worse. Remember how often labour disputes arise over the exact interpretation to be put upon the terms of a promise or an agreement and how much the minds of the men may be affected by rudeness in the wording of managerial orders. You can then estimate the amount of mischief that may be done by a careless or tactless interpreter. To make matters worse, many managers have the idea that Eurasian foremen are the best intermediaries

between the Indian workman and the European manager. But the fact is that the Eurasian is the worst possible intermediary, because he stands to lose far more than the pure-bred European from the abandonment of the old dominant race idea.

That brings me to another of the labour difficulties that are peculiar to India, and that is the racial difficulty. This difficulty is not yet acute at Tata's. On the one hand three or four Indians have already found their way up to the top, and there are two technical schools intended to train Indians for higher and lower positions at the works. On the other hand, though there is a good deal of complaint about the slowness of the process of Indianisation, yet it is generally admitted that the art of steel-making cannot be learnt in a day. But on the railways the racial difficulty has become very acute. So I was told not only by Indian labour leaders, but also by Anglo-Indian railway subordinates with a first-hand knowledge of the facts.

The racial difficulty appears in two forms. First, there is the young, half-trained mechanic brought out from home to start as an assistant foreman in the railway workshops. An old army "Tommy," now in railway employ, no labour agitator and no friend of labour agitators, gave me a very striking picture of the way this young man behaves when he first finds himself boss of a repair yard, with Indian engine-drivers and Indian firemen coming to him to ask for repairs. He is suffering from swelled head and he doesn't know his job, and he thinks swagger and bad language will enhance his importance in the eyes of the "coolies" he is dealing with. "'E don't know what's going on inside their 'eads. Lord bless

you, they can think the same as you and me. When a fireman gets cursed for coming and asking for repairs, why 'e goes away and 'e thinks, ' What good is this white man ? 'E cusses me and 'e draws ten times as much pay as me, but 'e doesn't know anything about an engine, not as much as I do.' They'll bring a revolution, these fellows, if they're not stopped. I'm a 'ome-bred man myself, but it's the 'ome-bred ones that's the worst." At another place I got very similar evidence from an old country-bred European stationmaster. " These young foremen, just out from home, they'll ruin all. They think themselves God Almighty, and they think the natives are all coolies, tho' there are men all round 'em that could put 'em in a bandbox and hush 'em to sleep there."

So much for the pure-bred European third-rater fresh out from home. The other difficulty is the Eurasian. The railways have been, and still are, the mainstay of the Eurasian community. The Eurasian's preferential right to employment on the railway has all along been more or less openly recognised. I have been told on good authority that it is a fact that Eurasians get paid seventy rupees for doing work which Indians are doing for thirty rupees. One result of this is that a low type of Indian Christian is apt to claim to be a Eurasian, and the claim, it is said, is often admitted. No small amount of friction is generated between these pseudo-Eurasian engine-drivers and their Indian firemen. It was an incident arising out of this friction that led to the greatest of Indian railway strikes.

It is hard luck on the Eurasian community that its reputation should suffer for the misconduct of these undesirable hangers-on. Even without them the

position of the community is sufficiently difficult and pitiable. The Eurasian's standard of living is higher, or at least more costly, than that of the Indian. But his education is not good enough to enable him to go into the open market and earn the extra income required to maintain the higher standard. It is only with the help of a preferential tariff such as is accorded to him on the railways that he can hope to get the income he needs. If there is to be free competition with the Indian he must then face the cruel necessity of a lowering in his standard of living. Small wonder if he finds it hard to accept the principle of racial equality.

From the above it will be seen that a political agitator who wished to make mischief would have little difficulty in stirring up labour troubles. It will also, I think, be apparent that even an outsider who honestly wishes to help labour may very easily find that he has done more harm than good. There are a few educated Indians following technical trades who have begun to act as leaders of their less-educated fellows. I met two such men at Tata's, and in ten years' time this class should be numerous enough to be important. But for the present the leadership of Indian labour must, as a rule, be in the hands of the outsiders. And I fear the outsiders will generally be politicians. It is true that some of the saner politicians have recognised that it is unfair and unwise to exploit labour grievances for political ends. But the average politician argues : " We want labour to help us, and if we do not help labour we cannot fairly ask it for its help. So let us go and see what we can do to help the labourer against his employer." There is reason to suppose that the argument is going

to prevail, and that Congress is about to devote special attention to the organisation of labour, as this will help to divert energy from the quarrel about entering the councils. Mr. C. R. Das has already gone so far as to say that he does not want Swaraj if it is only to mean the rule of the Indian middle classes. As if illiterate masses could have any real voice in the government of a country, whatever may be written in the paper Constitution! I hear, too, that a special fund is to be set apart to finance Congress volunteers, who are to be deputed to the chief industrial centres to organise labour and to help it to attain its rights. That sounds very nice, but the kind of help that inexperienced Congress volunteers are likely to give may easily cost labour very dear, not to speak of its effect on the progress of Indian industries.

## LIV

### THE ECONOMIC CAUSES OF UNREST

RED SEA, *December 7.*

THERE are many who say that the main cause of Indian unrest is economic. Some blame the rise in prices, others the increasing poverty of India. If they are right, why is the unrest greatest where the country is most prosperous? Look, for instance, at the Punjab, where the new irrigation works have undoubtedly enriched the whole population, and especially the Sikhs. I believe that there are other and more powerful forces at work unsettling the minds of the people. But economic forces, too, have played a part in producing the results that are before our eyes. In what follows, for the sake of simplicity, I shall have to ignore the effect of the slump. The fall in prices in India has not yet been sufficiently marked and general to have been appreciated by the population at large. On the whole people in India still think rather of the rise in prices which came at the end of the war than of the recent slight fall resulting from the slump.

Of course the rise in prices was a severe blow to the people with fixed or inelastic incomes, a large and important element in the population of the towns. It is also true that the rise taught the wage-earner the necessity of organising and fighting to secure a living wage, and suggested to him the idea



that something more than a living wage might be gained by good organisation and hard fighting. These facts would of themselves have sufficed to disturb the minds of the townsfolk, and, as I shall explain presently, there were other quasi-economic forces at work upsetting their equanimity. But what about the agriculturist? How has he been affected by the rise in prices? Is there any foundation for the popular notion that he is growing poorer? On the face of it, it would appear that the ryot must have gained by the rise in prices. The rate of interest on his old debts is not increased thereby, and law and custom prevent his rent or land tax from being enhanced to keep pace with the increase in the money value of his profits. Even when allowance is made for the depredations of the middleman, the rise in the price of the produce which the ryot sells seems on the average to be as steep as the rise in the price of the articles he has to purchase. So that by all the rules of arithmetic he should not be a loser. But the ryots are unanimous in denying that this arithmetic is correct. They assert that they are worse off than they were before the war. I don't think this assertion is merely another example of the farmer's habit of praising the past. I have heard it supported by coolheaded observers who were in close contact with the ryot and in a position to know the facts. In a few places the paradox is explained by the fact that the price of some crop of local importance has failed to keep level with the general rise in prices. This is true, I believe, of jute in Bengal. There are other areas, and pretty extensive areas, too, in which the text "Thou hast multiplied the nations and not increased the joy" must be accepted

as a just indictment of the British Raj requiring neither emendation nor explanation. Here the population has grown beyond the capacity of the land to support it, and the multiplication of the number of mouths to be fed more than cancels any gain accruing from favourable prices.

But there are, I think, two more general causes at work which tend to make the ryot not exactly poorer but less contented than he used to be. With the improvement in communications and the extension of trading activities, the ryot finds it easy to get a good price for much of the produce he used to consume himself. At the same time, he sees and is tempted to buy luxuries which his father never thought of. He sells his milk to a butter-making dairy, and turns the price into an umbrella for himself and an English shirt for his son to go to school in. In more than one village the schoolmaster assured me that the ryot won't send his six-year-old son to school without a shirt to wear. The father never wore a shirt at that age. Instead he drank the milk that is now sold to buy a shirt, and it seems probable that the milk and the sun did more for that generation than the shirt and the schoolhouse is doing for this one. In fact, the father himself has no faith in the shirt and the school. They make the boy too soft to plough in the sun, he says. But he puts his money into them all the same in a spirit of snobbishness because the rich man of the village gives his son a shirt and sends him to school. Other useless luxuries and ornaments he buys in the same spirit of ostentation and emulation, and thus impoverishes himself voluntarily and of his own free will and accord.

But there is another way in which the British Raj

has tended to impoverish the average man without requiring his assistance in the process. In the old days, before the British Raj began to substitute the reign of law for the reign of custom, there was little opportunity and little temptation for an able villager to raise himself at the expense of his fellows. The position of a rich villager was too precarious to be enviable, and the power which wealth gives was not likely to be long-lasting, especially if the goodwill of the neighbours was not conciliated. But when the reign of law was established it became worth the while of an able and energetic villager to amass wealth, and the rich villager could afford to be unpopular. Hence in the Indian village of to-day the man with a little extra ability and energy accumulates savings, and with the leverage which these savings give, his son, if he too has ability, will raise himself to a dominant position in the village at the expense of his less energetic neighbours. It is only since the establishment of the British Raj that land has begun to be freely mortgaged, bought, and sold. It is not true, or at least it is not everywhere true, that the result of this has been to throw the land into the hands of the non-cultivating money-lending classes. What happens not infrequently is that the ryot with ability uses his savings to set up as money-lender or grain trader. He can then quickly get quite a large area of land into his hands, and very likely he will cultivate this much better than the weaklings who originally owned it. In fact, our Raj has brought the "career open to the talents," but the weaklings, who are the majority, are apt to go to the wall. They may not be absolutely poorer than their forefathers. They are certainly in less danger of being left to die

of starvation in time of famine. But they compare their lot with the luxuries enjoyed by their rich neighbour. They see the things they have to do without, and that makes them feel poor and unhappy.

These causes of discontent operate with even greater force in the towns. There they are breaking up the old joint family system. The man of energy who is making money wishes to raise his standard of living and to send his son to England like X, who has no bigger an income than he is earning. He is annoyed when he finds himself prevented from doing so by the burden of having to support half a dozen idle brothers and nephews who were bred up to the idea that it is quite proper to expect your cousin or your uncle to supply the wants of yourself and your wife and children. Now these idlers are being made to feel that their maintenance is grudged them, and they are lamenting about the economic strain and the strenuousness of modern life.

There is another point that is worth attention. I hear everywhere that the attractions of town life—coffee hotels, kinemas, etc.—are drawing all the brains and energy out of the villages into the towns. And, just as the ryot with brains and energy enriches himself at the expense of his less capable neighbours, so the towns in which energy, brains, and education are concentrated find it easy to enrich themselves at the expense of the countryside. The profits of the traders, bankers, manufacturers, and professional men are disproportionately big, and an unfair share of the land tax is spent in the towns. British Indian Governments have been on the whole pretty economical, but there are many who hope that the Inchcape Committee will record a protest against the sums that

have been put into bricks and mortar not only in Delhi but in all provincial and many district headquarters. This is an old vice of Indian Governments. The architects of Akbar and Shah Jehan made it seem worth while. But the virtue of our provincial governors might fairly be expected to resist the seductions of the Public Works Department.

If the money squandered on Public Works Department architecture had been put into village roads and village wells, the District Board President would be finding it much easier to persuade the ryot that he is a more valuable friend than the Non-Co-operating agitator. It may now be too late, for the public works programmes were pruned last year with a drastic hand, and the clippings went to the army, not to the ryot.

## LV

### CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT IN INDIA

RED SEA, *December 8.*

ON a previous page I suggested that the individualistic competitive system which has grown up under the British Raj does not make for the prosperity of the villages or for the happiness of the average villager. Is there any prospect of substituting the co-operative system in rural areas? None, unless India throws herself into the work with at least as much enthusiasm as she is now devoting to the cult of khaddar. At present she is standing aloof and looking on while Government officials are attempting a task that is far too big to be left to Government agencies.

The progress of the co-operative movement throws an interesting light not only on the prospect of the ryot's economic regeneration but also on the question of India's ripeness for democratic self-government, and on the practical effect of the spirit and policy of Non-Co-operation. I will therefore give you what I have been able to pick up regarding co-operation in India. The movement is still dependent for its existence on Government organisation. The deposits and loans which finance the movement would not be forthcoming if it were not known that there is a Government department which maintains a strict supervision over the doings of the societies and the

central banks. In fact, most of the depositors probably believe that the Government have guaranteed the safety of their deposits, though this is not the case. The completeness of the dependence of the movement on the Government may be gauged from the fact that all over the country the co-operative credit societies are known as "Sircar Banks."

Further, co-operation in India has not yet been generally successful in dealing with any business more intricate than that of the simple credit society. Even in regard to credit the societies now in existence do not supply the needs of 5 per cent. of the rural population. When you see the figures of the total sum lent out the achievement of the co-operative credit societies looks big. But when you compare the figures with the total needs of the country you see that only the fringe has been touched. Is the work done by the societies of any real value? I have heard the whole movement condemned as eye-wash, and so it may be in a few districts. But I was much impressed by the evidence of a senior civilian, a hard-headed and experienced man who had never been responsible for the Department concerned. He told me that he had been entirely sceptical about the possibilities of co-operation in India till he was transferred to a district where he had time to make inquiries into the working of the local societies. These inquiries satisfied him that the societies had a real effect in lowering the rate of interest and, further that the ryot had taken hold of the idea of co-operation. Though the Government supervision was there, yet the societies had some independent life of their own.

That was in the Bombay Presidency. In the

United Provinces and Bengal I got opportunities of seeing the members of some rural societies and of forming my own estimate of their capacity for self-government and of the value of their work. The conclusion I came to was that there could be no doubt about the value of the work that was being done through their agency in the direction of lowering the rate of interest paid by the ryot. The actual reduction effected was from an average rate of at least 24 per cent. to 15 per cent. In regard to the ryot's capacity for self-government, the lessons to be drawn from the organisation of these societies were more instructive than encouraging. There is a great deal of centralisation. The rural societies are held very tightly by the central banks, small capitalist organisations which do useful work and at the same time make a tidy profit by attracting deposits and employing them in financing the rural societies. In Oudh, owing to the illiteracy of the ryot, centralisation has been carried to its highest pitch. Each village society has its own elected panchayat or committee of villagers. But the secretary of the society, who keeps its accounts and in practice probably manages its business, is not a villager but a townsman. He is nominated by the central bank to a whole-time salaried post as secretary to a group of a dozen societies. The societies pay his salary, but they can have no control over him, as the committee members are not sufficiently literate to check his doings or to complain of his conduct to the central bank. Above the secretary is the supervisor, who is a whole-time salaried official appointed and paid by the central bank to instruct the societies and the secretaries in their duties and to check and report



on their doings. The rural societies are financed by the central bank. They have little or no cash of their own, nor does the central bank trust any of its cash to their management. When a member of a society desires a loan his application is first approved by the committee and then submitted by the secretary to the central bank, with full details regarding the need for the loan and the solvency of the applicant. The central bank obtains a report from its supervisor on each case, and decides on his report whether to sanction or refuse the loan. If the loan is sanctioned the money is then remitted to the village for disbursement to the applicant. In fact, the function of the society is little more than to stand surety for each of its members and to assist in the collection of the loan when it falls due for repayment.

It is plain that the secretary and the supervisor have the villagers in the hollow of their hand. Neither of these gentlemen receives a salary of the standard that is usually required to guarantee honesty. I inquired whether they took advantage of their position to appropriate a commission on the margin between 15 per cent. and 24 per cent. I was told by those who ought to know that dishonesty of this sort is surprisingly rare, perhaps because there is a feeling that in working for co-operation you are working for a good cause which it would be a shame to disgrace. It was, however, admitted that slackness on the part of the secretaries and supervisors was common, and leads to delays which are apt to drive the ryot back to the village money-lender.

Apart from the question of the honesty and efficiency of the administration, it is obvious that there is very little co-operation and no self-government in

a system which gives the supervisor and the central bank such complete control over every transaction of the societies, and does not even require the village society to supply its own secretary.

Politicians tell me that this excessive centralisation is the result of the bureaucratic tendencies of the registrars and assistant registrars, the Government officers who are responsible for encouraging and supervising the movement. I doubt this. A great deal of centralisation is inevitable where the villager is as illiterate and as unbusiness-like as he is over the greater part of India. Even so, there is no doubt more centralisation than is necessary. But this is not entirely or even mainly the fault of the registrars and their assistants. I have known many of these men in different parts of India. They complain with one voice of the scarcity of educated non-officials public-spirited enough to take part in the movement, and thus to relieve the officials and the central banks of the burden of educating and supervising in detail the illiterate and untrustworthy village committees. Some of the assistant registrars are perhaps a little autocratic in their tempers and unwilling to give sufficient latitude to non-official volunteers. But I know others who certainly understand how to encourage and make the best use of such non-official help as is forthcoming. Yet these men are the loudest in their complaints of the dearth of non-official workers.

And not every non-official worker is anxious to combat the tendency to centralisation. In the course of a conversation with the non-official manager of a central bank I asked him why he followed the system of appointing a townsman as a whole-time

salaries secretary to a group of villages instead of getting a volunteer secretary in each village. He explained that there were but few villages where a suitable man was available. I asked whether it would not be possible to use the village schoolmaster where there was one. He replied : " We do try them sometimes. But, after all, why should we ? A whole-time man gets to know our rules better. We have no trouble with him. Besides, he is more dependent on us, and therefore more completely under our control. It would cost us a world of trouble to teach a lot of village schoolmasters our rules, and they might have their own notions about the way the society should be run." Talk about the bureaucratic tendency ! This manager was not only a non-official but also a rather eminent Non-Co-operator. I certainly find it difficult to believe that when Swaraj comes the administration will be any less bureaucratic than it is to-day.

In Bengal the villagers were less illiterate, and centralisation had consequently not been carried quite so far. Each village society had its own secretary, and the secretaries whom I saw were genuine villagers. They knew their business all right, and were interested. I imagine they ran the show themselves without much assistance from the village committee. But if the secretary should prove dishonest or an ass, the committeemen would be sufficiently intelligent to get rid of him. The position of the central bank supervisors is, however, dangerously strong even in Bengal, especially in the not uncommon case where the supervisor happens to be related to one of the directors of the bank. Again, Bengal supplies a number of dreadful warnings of

the danger of insufficient official supervision. In one district societies had been started rashly and left to run themselves. The clever village rascal had seen his chance and taken it. Many societies had to be wound up and many honest ryots lost money.

I was talking one day to a young Bengali Non-Co-operator. His zeal had carried him a bit too far in his student days, but he had a great deal of sense as well as spirit, together with a real knowledge of the villager. He was speaking of the ryots' indebtedness, arguing, sensibly enough, that nothing much could be done for agriculture till the ryot had been given a chance of attaining solvency. I said that I was inclined to agree, and that I thought that things might begin to move if he and his like would divert their energies from Non-Co-operation into the organisation of co-operative credit. He said that he could not enter that field because it was already occupied by the Government, and he feared that any contribution that he might make to the co-operative movement would be in danger of being captured by the Government and utilised for its own ends. That seemed to me a very clear example of the way that the spirit of Non-Co-operation is succeeding in ruining the administration and with it the country. This was just the man to be of use in the co-operative movement, and I have already shown you the registrars of co-operation lamenting that the co-operative movement is paralysed by the shortage of public-spirited volunteers.

## LVI

### A FINAL SURVEY

MEDITERRANEAN SEA, *December 12.*

HERE is my appreciation of the situation in India.

The army of Non-Co-operation has suffered a crushing tactical defeat. It has to reorganise and form a new plan of campaign. Its leaders are divided amongst themselves, and the rank and file have not much confidence in them.

But the spirit of Non-Co-operation remains, not pure Gandhism but distrust of the foreign Government, a longing to be quit of it and an unwillingness to work with it even for the common good.

The educated classes and the townsfolk are permeated with this spirit. The ryot is affected over a large area,<sup>1</sup> as yet rather superficially, it is true, but conditions in the village are such that the spirit is likely to strike deeper roots. The army is as yet apparently unaffected, but the army is recruited from the villages and sooner or later must follow the villagers' lead, even if direct contamination can be avoided.

<sup>1</sup> The disaffection of the ryot is not entirely a new thing. A pro-British Indian official, a sensible and experienced old gentleman, told me that it had been his duty in the early years of the war to tour through country villages to stimulate recruiting and subscriptions to war loans and war charities. He was surprised and shocked to find in all the villages a malicious pleasure in the news of our defeats and a vague hope for change. After all, that is human nature.

It is often among the best men that this spirit of Non-Co-operation is strongest. You find it even among the best of the Moderates. They differ from the Non-Co-operators only in this : that they have a deep dislike for revolutionary methods. But this dislike is not shared by the country at large ; it is felt only by men of exceptional experience or exceptional powers of imagination. The country as a whole is in sympathy with the rashness of the Non-Co-operators rather than with the prudence of the Moderates. Bear this in mind when you read of the conciliatory temper displayed by the members of the Legislative Assembly and of the Provincial Councils. They do not represent the country, certainly not if they ever suggest that a reconciliation could be bought cheaply.

In spite of the defeat of the campaign of Non-Co-operation, the idea that the British power is not what it was is still dangerously prevalent, especially among the Mohammedans and the Sikhs. Some think that English Labour is a revolutionary force that is likely to disrupt the Empire. Others have got the notion that we are afraid of Russia. The prevalence of this idea of our weakness makes cheap bids for a reconciliation dangerous. Such bids can do no good ; they may do harm by confirming the opinion that we are weak and frightened.

Suppose for a moment that England really thought it worth while to secure a reconciliation even if the price were high, on what terms could it be bought ?

There is one school that contains many good men and true, men not lacking in vigour and patriotism, who yet say that one thing only is needed—change of heart. These men have no use for constitutional

concessions. They see that India is not ripe for democracy, and they do not desire an Indian bureaucracy. But, like all Indians, they feel that racial equality is still denied to them, and that this denial is inconsistent with their self-respect. I have a good deal of sympathy with this school. But they ask too much of us. We can change the Constitution but not the heart.

There are many Europeans who hold that the present position is untenable and that we cannot go back. They say, "Give provincial autonomy, stop all recruiting from home, and provincialise the services." That being interpreted means: "Put the whole of the provincial administration, including the police, into the hands of Indian Ministers responsible to the Legislative Council; Indianise the services and make them entirely subordinate to the Ministers, giving such protection or compensation as may be necessary to the Europeans now in service, and allowing the Ministers to make their own bargain with any Europeans they may think it necessary to import in future." That is quite a practical proposition. It is not certain that it would entail any deterioration in the administration greater than the existing system seems likely to produce. But the surrender of control over the police would, of course, very appreciably loosen our hold on the country. Would it win for us in exchange what we really want, a reconciliation, a restoration of confidence in our good faith and active co-operation of the people with the Administration?

Most Moderates and many Non-Co-operators tell me that these concessions, if made at once and coupled with a few minor changes in the central Government, would be sufficient to satisfy the Moderates and to

win back a large section of the Non-Co-operators. But since it is so obvious that the reality of power lies with the man who controls the army, and seeing that the finances of the provinces are vitally affected by the army Budget, and remembering the advantage enjoyed by any political agitator who stands for the extreme logical and uncompromising course, I agree with those who maintain that these concessions would have no useful effect unless the Indianisation of the army were taken in hand at the same time and in good earnest. But the Indianisation of the army is so ticklish and so dangerous an operation that it would be folly to attempt it except as part of a programme which would secure the whole-hearted co-operation of India beyond all shadow of doubt.

I have heard two such programmes outlined by Indian politicians. One calls for an Act of Parliament providing that India shall automatically attain full Dominion Home Rule on a fixed date and arranging for the gradual transfer of control during the intervening period. The other requires a convention representative of all interests and all shades of opinion in India, this convention to draft a Constitution for India within the Empire and to lay down the stages by which the new Constitution shall be brought into force or to provide machinery for the periodic revision of the Constitution, England to guarantee statutory sanction to the Constitution evolved provided that it complied with certain reasonable conditions.

My own belief is that this latter is the only possible peaceful solution of the Indian problem if, after all, any peaceful solution is possible. I also believe that



if a really representative Indian convention <sup>1</sup> got together (it would, of course, have to include Mr. Gandhi as well as the chosen representatives of the Indian princes, the Khilafatists, the depressed classes, the Parsis, the Indian Christians, the Sikhs, the Eurasians, European and Indian capitalists, etc.), and if it were made to understand that effect was really going to be given to its proposals, the resulting proposals would be surprisingly conservative and would show a surprising willingness to make use of our help and even to pay for it. The Indian is a very sensible man except when his suspicions are awakened or his feelings are hurt.

I am well aware that England is not likely just now to pay any heed to the demand for a more satisfactory adjustment of her relations with India. Not that she bears India any ill will, nor that she has any very clear conception of the advantages she gains from her present position, but simply because she thinks it imprudent or undignified to budge till someone has stamped hard upon her toes. Supposing, then, that England turns a deaf ear to India's remonstrance and declines to budge, what is the probable course of events? I do not think India will succeed in stamping effectively on England's toes during the next five or ten years. Not that she lacks the will, but she is at present barefoot and will not for some time be able to provide herself with the right kind of boots.

To drop metaphors. Assuming that no blow

<sup>1</sup> Such a convention would, of course, have no chance of success unless it met at a favourable moment when the principal interests were in a mood to make a settlement. The aim of our policy can only be to create conditions in which such a convention may have at least a chance of success.

comes from without and that the Mohammedans are placated by the conclusion of a favourable peace with Turkey, I do not think India will be able to organise a really formidable revolutionary movement in the next five years, and perhaps not in the next ten years. It will take some time yet to work the ryots up to the pitch requisite for a widespread refusal to pay taxes, and, excepting always an army mutiny, it is not easy to see any other really formidable weapon which the revolutionists can employ. And it is not likely that the Executive will give any future revolutionary so long a rope as they allowed Mr. Gandhi.

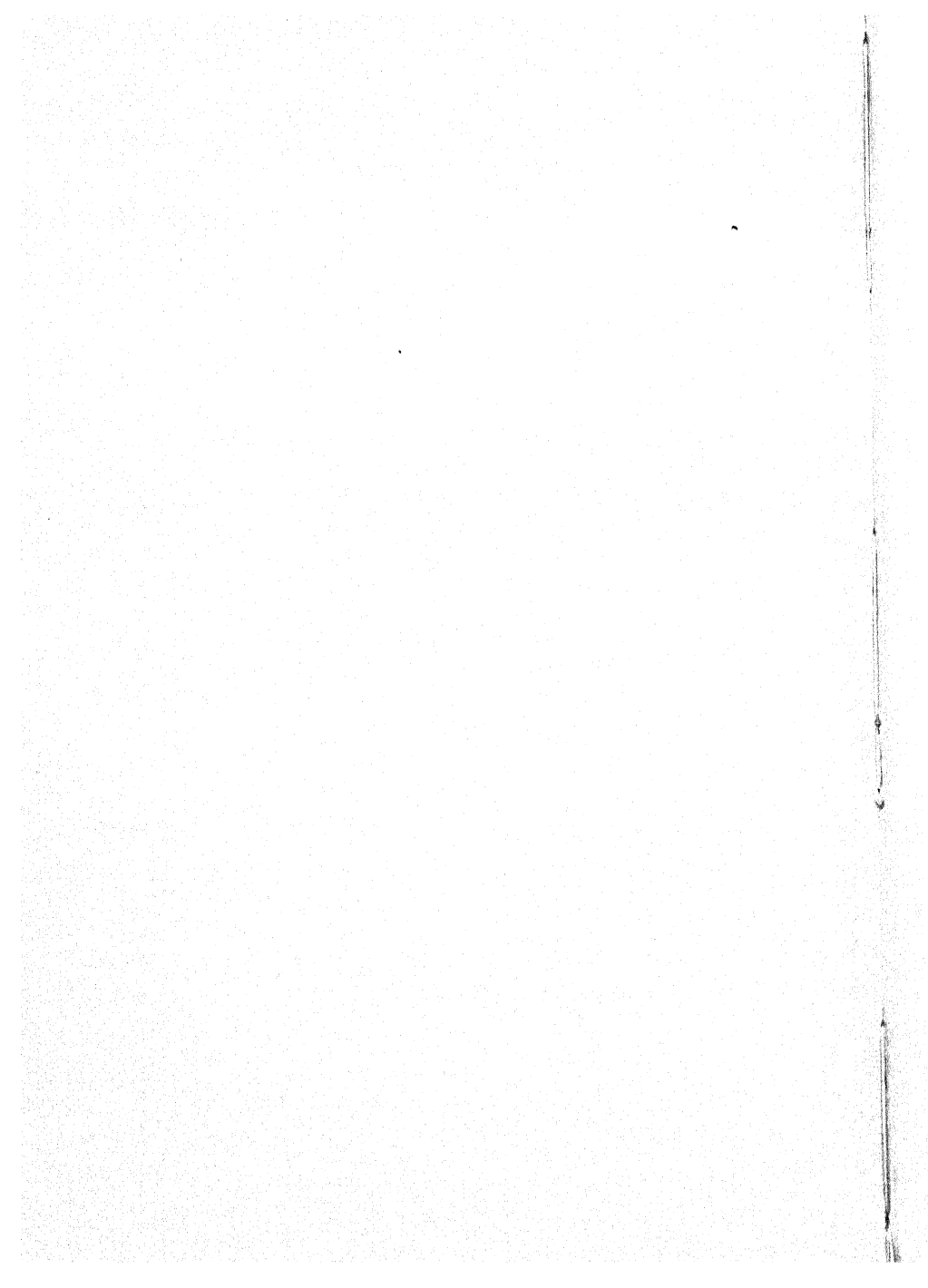
What is to be expected is that the country will refuse to abandon its present attitude of sullen aloofness and distrust, except that from time to time it will find vent for its energy in a spasm of agitation, each spasm taking an uglier shape than the last. Boycott will be succeeded by mob violence, and a murder campaign may come later. These agitations will necessitate coercion, pretty strenuous coercion, because Non-Co-operation has succeeded in stripping the idea of gaol of most of the terror and all the disgrace that used to attach to it. Coercion will excite friction and make new enemies. The Councils will become more and more organs of criticism and of agitation and will be less and less inclined to accept any responsibility for the administration of the transferred subjects. Encouragement will be given to India's demoralising tendency to blame anyone rather than herself for everything that goes wrong. All the time there will be flowing a steady stream of propaganda—that is, lies. The attitude of distrust of all things English is something of a pose with the

generation that is passing away. It will come natural to the rising generation. For that generation is being taught to accept without question readings of history which its fathers regarded as interesting paradoxes.

By the end of eight years things may have gone too far to leave any hope of an advantageous and honourable settlement. That would be a disaster for India as well as for us. For I do not believe that India is yet able to stand alone. She needs our help, and she is, I believe, still willing to accept it provided she can get it on terms which she regards as consistent with her self-respect. But if we do not make it possible for India to take our help without loss of self-respect, then we must expect to see her civilised, tolerant, and rational but over-sensitive peoples cutting their own throats in the endeavour to cut ours. Which Heaven avert.

I am at the end of my voyage and have said my say. It only remains to record my gratitude for much kindness shown me in India by Indians, by Americans, and by my own countrymen.

THE END



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